CHAPTER IV

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AND

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I am giving a brief history of Punjab during the lifetime of Guru Nanak to describe the socio-political conditions prevalent in those days and attitude of rulers and populace towards the art of dance.

PART 'A' - HISTORICAL MILIEU

4.1.1 GURU NANAK'S BIRTH:

In 1469, a century before Babar laid the foundation of Mughal Empire, Baba Nanak the founder of Sikhism was born in village Talvandi near Lahore, now in Pakistan. At that time Bhalol Lodi ruled India. Guru Nanak belonged to the Bedi Sub-Division of Khatri Caste. The house where Guru Nanak was born, is now a place of public worship and is located at Nankana Sahib. Guru Nanak's father Kalu Chand was a Patwari. Guru Nanak lived in mortal frame for 71 years five months and five days. Some say that he lived for 60 years two months and ten days. However, it is clear that the former period is correct.

2. Philosophy of Sikhism, P 25.
4.1.2 RULERS DURING GURU NANAK'S PERIOD:

Bhalol Khan who belonged to Afghan tribe of Lodhi and was the Governor of Lahore and Sirhind, ousted Shah Alam, the last ruler of Sayyid dynasty from power and laid the foundation of Lodhi dynasty in 1450. Ibrahim Lodhi, the grandson of Bhalol Khan was the last king of Lodhi dynasty who ruled from 1517 to 1526. The despotic rule of Ibrahim Lodhi and his attempts to weaken the power of Afghan military commanders lead to large scale unrests. The unrests reached such a climax that some feudal lords including Daulat Khan, the Governor of Punjab invited Babar to invade India for their safety. In 1526, Babar defeated Ibrahim Lodhi in the battle of Panipat and laid the foundation of Mughal Empire which was to shape the history of India for next 200 years. Rana Sangha who endeavoured to unite all Rajput territories under his rule was defeated by Babar in 1527. These two victories consolidated Babar's rule over Northern India. Babar had lead five invasions on Punjab after 1519, but the last victory in the battle of Panipat in 1526, put him on the throne of Delhi.¹

4.1.3 BABAR'S CHARACTER:

In order to study the influence of Babar towards art, dance and music it is pertinent to describe the character of this Mughal King.

Babar was a staunch Sunni Muslim who had complete faith in God. He used to say, "nothing happens except by the will of God". He had great faith in prayer which is amply illustrated by the manner in which he took upon himself the illness of his son. He was not a religious fanatic like other orthodox Sunni rulers. However, he did not follow a liberal religious policy towards other people (non-Muslims). He described in his memoirs the death of Raja Vikramjit of Gwalior and other Hindus as their going to hell. He called the war against Rana Sanga as Jihad - i.e. Holy war. He exhorted his men to fight against Rana Sanga as a religious duty. He defaced beautiful statues in the fort of Gwalior. He discriminated against Hindu traders when he abolished stamp duty for Muslim traders only. As an individual, Babar's character was exemplary. He was a dutiful son and a good friend. He believed in the essential goodness of human nature. He had all the qualities of a soldier, viz, a fine shot, horseman and a skilled swordman.

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1. The Mughal Empire, P 34-40.
Babar was a highly educated and observant man. He was a poet possessed of a sensitive understanding of art. He was in fact a great scholar and lover of fine arts. The memoirs he left are written in a simple, precise language. He was fond of music and nature. However, he despised Hindus and regarded them as 'Infidels'. Though he looked down upon Hindus, yet he did not persecute them.¹

4.1.4 GURU NANAK'S DESCRIPTION OF TYRANNY BY INVADERS:

India in the 15th century and the centuries that preceded it, had been subjected to invasions of ruthless armies massacring men without mercy in the name of religion and plundering without distinction. The people of India had forsaken their spiritual heritage. There being no united action, the power to defend themselves had been lost. They wasted their stock of noble emotions in observance of endless rituals and taboos. Small independent states were at war with each other and were in no position to retain power in the face of the tyrants.²

When Babar invaded Punjab in 1521 and subjected inhabitants of Saidpur (Eminbad) to untold tortures and atrocities, Guru Baba Nanak was a witness to the acts of depradation committed by the Muslim raiders and wrote a lucid account of the atrocities committed by them in these words:

"The Lord from Babar's invasion protected Khorasan,
And on Hindustan let loose the terror.
The Lord himself punishes not.
So the Mughal Babar He sent down,
Dealing death as Yama,
As in their agony of suffering the people wailed,
Didst Thou feel no compassion of them?
Listen Thou who art creator of all.
Should a powerful foe molest one equally powerful
Little would the mind be grieved.

But when a ferocious tiger falls upon,
a herd of kine,
Then must the master be called to account.
These dogs that despoiled the Jewels,
and wasted them
Now, in their death none shall remember them."

4.2.1 **CASTE SYSTEM:**

Hindu society was caste ridden and was divided into four castes (Brahmins, Khastriyas, Vaish and Sudras). Brahmins had the privilege and preserve to perform all types of ceremonies. No ceremony, whether it be regarding birth, marriage or death could be performed without associating a brahmin who would perform ceremonies with recitation of some vedic hymns. Temples were exclusively manned by brahmins. Sudras had no right to enter temples or to recite hymns from holy scriptures.\(^1\) They were untouchables and lived doing menial work for the high castes.

4.2.2 **IDOLATORY:**

Idolatry was entirely unknown during the vedic times,\(^2\) however during the later periods and right till date, is a common feature among Hindus. The extent of prevalence of idolatry can be visualised from the writings of MA Sherring who estimated that the city of Banaras contained 1454 temples and that:

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1. Sikh Gurus and Indian Spiritual Thought, P 42.
"the number of idols actually worshiped by the people certainly exceeds the number of people themselves, though multiplied twice over, it cannot be less than half a million and may be more. 'Idolatory' he adds "is a charm, a fascination to Hindu. It is the food of his soul. It is the foundation of his hope, both for this world and another. ('The sacred city of Hindus', London 1868, P 41)."^1

Baba Nanak was averse to idolatory. He described idolatory in the following terms at Page 556 of S.G.G.S. "The Hindus, straying in abysmal forgetfulness have followed the wrong path. As Narda (The Sage) taught so they worship (idols), blind and dumb (they walk) in pitch darkness, worshipping this ridiculous stone which they have set up. It sinks so how can it carry you across (the ocean of existence)?".\(^2\)

4.2.3 STATUS OF WOMEN:

Paradoxically, the Hindus have always looked downed upon their women. Manu declared "Day and night women must be kept in subordination to the males of the family : in childhood to the father, in youth to her husband, in old age to her sons."\(^3\)

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^1 Sikh Gurus and Indian Spiritual Thought, P 42.
^2 S.G.G.S., P 556.
^3 Facets of Guru Nanaks Thoughts, P 121.
Thus in Hindus, notorious subordination of woman seems to be entirely due to law givers. Shri D.P. Mukherji in his book 'Modern Culture' states that "Hindu woman religiously is a sudra and is not entitled to the Gayatri Mantra" : Thus a man cannot eat with his wife since she has sudra status even if she is born of Brahmin parents. According to Digambra Jains, women can never attain salvation except by being born again as man. Again it is also held in orthodox Hindus that a Hindu woman is not supposed to walk by the side of her husband. She must remain a few paces behind him. It is also held by the orthodox that if she touches a consecrated image, the divinity of image is also destroyed and it is rendered useless.\(^1\)

In medieval India, woman was not treated well. Sant Tulsi Das placed woman at pār with a beast and a Shudra. Bhagat Kabir regarded woman as living picture of lust and sexual gratification. He further says that under her shadow a snake becomes blind and that the man who daily keeps her company must fare even worst. She was sold in child marriage, condemned to miserable widowhood.\(^2\) On the death of her husband she was forced to alight his funeral pyre

\(^1\) Facets of Guru Nanak's Thoughts, P 121.
\(^2\) Ibid, P 127.
and commit 'Sati'. The women were the worst sufferers at the time of every invasion as they were carried away by victors as herd of cattle.

Philosophers, teachers and religious leaders have held different views about women. However, it was only Guru Nanak who has bestowed on women full equality in religious, social, political and practical life. He regarded man and woman as offspring of God and considered them equal. According to Baba Nanak, if there is any special achievement of the whole world, it is only woman, for it is from woman that one learns the lesson of love. For this very reason Guru Nanak has preached in 'Asa Di Var' to sing the praises of woman everyday. The whole poetry of Guru Nanak is replete with a woman's feelings, emotions and experiences. God has been addressed with the epithets of 'husband', 'friend', 'companion' and 'beloved'. This is so because it is only woman who can show true love and affection and who exhibiting her love cravings can please her husband - God. Guru Nanak mentions about innumerable other qualities of woman as she possesses love, obedience, self sacrifice, grace, tenderness and refinement.

1. Facets of Guru Nanak's Thoughts, P 124.
2. Ibid, P 125.
4.2.4 GURU NANAK'S VIEWS ON HINDU SOCIETY:

It may be stated that deceit, corruption and tyranny was the order of the day and hypocrisy was rampant. As in 'Assa di Var', Guru Nanak lucidly drew the picture of prevailing malady in the society stating:

"You perform Hindu worship in your house but you read the religious books (Holy Quaran etc) of the Mohammedans (in public) and you adopt their customs. O! brother, leave this hypocrisy, you can swim across the world ocean (only) by repeating God's name".¹

4.2.5 STATUS OF HINDUS DURING MUSLIM RULE:

During the sultanates, Muslims had a better status than Hindus. Even Hindu converts to Islam were looked down upon and addressed as 'Rasil' which means a person of low status. They were not given any responsible posts. Hindus were called Kafers (Idol worshipers) and enjoyed no sympathy from Muslims. Hindus were treated as second class subjects called Zimmi. However, Hindus because of their numerical strength were allowed to run and manage village panchayats. This was because Turkish Sultans did not have sufficient resources to take the management of village in their own hands.²

¹. Asa Divar, P 11.
As the way to Delhi for the foreign invaders lay through Punjab, the people of this province were the biggest sufferers. Afghans, Turks and other muslim dynasties ruled Northern India through their military strength. They exploited the people and fleeced them and imposed Jazia Kar (personal Tax) on non-muslims. Hindu temples were demolished and mosques built in their place. It is said that in Dera Ghazi Khan district a Hindu could ride a donkey only, there was great gulf between Hindu and Muslim population, which was the creation of the rulers of those times. Capital punishment was imposed for any criticism of Islam. Bodhan Brahmin was put to death by Sikander Lodhi (1488-1517) for just stating that Hinduism was as good a religion as Islam. Forcible conversion of Hindus was not infrequent.\(^1\)

Sikandar Lodhi was a persecutor of Hindus. According to Tarikh-Daudi, 'he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of infidels and left out a vestige remaining of them'.\(^2\)

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2. Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, P 43.
In such an inhospitable atmosphere Baba Nanak passed the first three decades of his life. The next two decades were spent by him visiting various parts of India and outside the country, thus cutting him off from the intolerance of Lodhi regime.¹

¹ Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, P 43.
4.3.1 INFLUENCE OF ISLAM:

Islam started to penetrate Sind in the seventh century and other parts of Northern India in ninth century. However, it was on formation of Delhi Sultanate towards the end of 12th century (defeat of Prithviraj by Muhammed Ghuri) that Islam was made the state religion and forced upon the local population. A part of Hindu population adopted Islam; some under force, some due to the privileges it extended (Only Muslims could hold prominent posts) and some in order not to pay jaziya or toll tax levied on non-Muslims. A large number of lower castes converted to Islam so as to avoid disadvantages associated with their status.

Muslim scholars and poets from other countries also came to India and were given a place of respect in the darbars of Sultans. Over a period of time there was substantial increase in Muslim population.

2. Ibid, P 203.
3. Ibid, P 224.
and in some areas Muslims came to be in majority. Even though the ruling class comprised of only Muslims (Officers and soldiers in the Army, Governors and other prominent officials), a large chunk of the population remained Hindus (tax-collectors, merchants and money lenders, and by and large the entire peasant class).¹

Despite fierce clashes between the Hindus and Muslims, their long co-existence within the same country led to mutual influence in shaping beliefs and customs. Even during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi, a fanatic Muslim, who made it a point to destroy all Hindu temples and was most severe in his treatment towards non-Muslims, the cultural intercourse between the two religious traditions continued. Sanskrit classics were translated into Persian. A famous work produced was Mian Bhuva's 'Tibb-Sikandri': a medical treatise based on ancient Hindu medical system. The first work on Indian music in Persian was also produced during this period. It was called 'Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi'. As a result of contact between Persian and Lahori (from Lahore) which was the then prevalent form of Punjabi, a new language known as 'Hindwi, combining the vocabulary of both languages took

¹. A History of India Book I, P 224.
shape. Amir Khusrau wrote verses in Hindwi. By
the fusion of Indian and Persian system of music
evolved new common forms and melodies. Some
of these are attributed to Amir Khusrau who is
credited with being the originator of 'Khayal'.
He invented 'ghazal' and 'qawwali' and the instrument
'sitar' which represented a combination of the
Indian 'Veena' and Iranian 'Tambur'.

Similarly, in many spheres the Hindu and Muslim
ways of life were influenced by each other. The
Turkish dress consisting of Shalwar, tight gown
(quba), loose outer robe (Jbbah) and turban became
a common dress of Muslims and Hindus of upper class.
The colour of dress worn by all people during the
rule of Turks and Pathan was blue.

The Muslims adopted some aspects of Yoga
philosophy and started participating in Hindu festivals.
They started celebrating Shab-i-Barat in the style
as Hindus celebrated Shivratri by keeping awake
during the night and using fire works. Bringing
out of Taziyas was reminiscent of the Hindu ceremonial
procession in a chariot of Jagnnath. This annual ritual
was unknown in any other country.

2. Ibid.
3. Asa Di Var, By Harbans Singh Boabia, P 94.
The Hindus came under the influence of Muslim idea of brotherhood, the way of life followed by Sufi orders and then teachings concerning the existence of various paths to be followed to achieve union with God.

4.3.2. Sufism:

Sufism is essentially a mystical system akin to the devotional mysticism of the saints of India. It is basically a part of Islam. It is said by the scholars that the word sufi' is derived from Safa (Purity). Sufi is one who is free from all the impurities of the worldly life. These days the scholars use the term sufism in the sense of Mohammadan mysticism. But Indian sufism is not purely of Mohammadan origin. Some learned people believe that Indian sufism was deeply influenced by 'vedantam'. The sufi saints liked devotional music which is accompanied by musical instruments.¹

The prominent Sufi saints of that period were Nizam-ud-din Auliya (dt 1325) who was known for his tolerance to Hindus and the high moral principles he demanded of his followers: Sharaf-ud-din Ahmed Manery, who wrote his epistles in the mid fourteenth century wherein he advocated

¹ History of Punjab, P 307-310.
tolerance with regard to the Hindu Customs which had penetrated Muslim circle. He demanded that the spiritual leaders must renounce the worldly comforts. Faridud-din-Ganj-Shakar (1175-1265) was a very popular saint. He translated into Hindi the mystical dictums upheld by the sufis of his order, who by their dances and recitals of holy songs brought themselves to a state of ecstasy. Faridud-din was known to be an extremely gentle and a human person. It was he who used to say "The needle is better than the knife," for the needle sews together, while the knife rends asunder" Hymns attributed to him have been preserved in the sacred writings of sikhs known as 'Adi Granth'.

4.3.3 BHAKTI MOVEMENT:

The reapproachment between Hindu and Islamic ideas became more marked in the later stage of Bhakti movement. This movement was undertaken by Guru Nanak against the contemporary order. It provided an outlet for discontent with and opposition to the ruling class. The movement propagated the idea of one God, devotion to whom was within the reach of any man of whatever caste or faith. Guru Nanak's Bhakti movement proclaimed equality and a protest against those in power as well as

privileged positions enjoyed by Hindu and Muslim religious leaders. Even though a Hindu movement, the spiritual leader of Bhakti movement addressed to both Hindus and Muslims. They expounded their teachings in the form of hymns in various local languages. The hymns were sung to popular tunes thus spreading the Bhakti idea among vast portion of the population. These hymns frequently became popular folk songs. Another saint, by the name of Sant Kabir, (1380-1414) who was a weaver by profession enjoyed the greatest influence within the Bhakti movement. He sang his songs in Brij bhasa which formed the basis of modern Hindi. Kabir preached that God was within the man's heart and was in both Rama and Allah.

Baba Nanak resolutely criticised the inequalities stemming from the caste system and demanded from his followers that they eat together regardless of caste differences. He propagated promotion of welfare of fellow beings. Thus Bhakti was the most accepted spiritual institution which transformed itself into a movement at the hands of Guru Nanak.

Chaitanya (1486-1534) from Bengal linked in one faith the principle of Bhakti and the Vaishnavite cult of Krishna. He also did not believe in the caste system and had number of Muslims as his followers. Chaitanya used to rouse in himself and his followers
a state of ecstasy by using ritual processions and singing of love songs. He preached that through Bhakti alone one can attain the supreme Lord.¹

4.3 4 GURU NANAK'S TEACHINGS:

The mul mantra in Jap Ji Sahib gives the picture of God which should be the aim of man's life to achieve. The mul mantra starts with 'EK Omkar' meaning thereby that there is one and only one God. It further describes the various attributes of the Divine. Baba Nanak says "He is eternal, He was, He is, and He will be. He is fearless, revengeless, with enmity to no one, changeless, unborn, and undying. He is enlightener to be known and realised by the grace of Guru (The divinely gifted teacher)".

According to Baba Nanak, "He is the life of all life. He created the earth and heaven and sustains them at all times. He rules the universe by His supreme will and every one has to surrender to His will. He is the supreme ruler of the world and listens to the sincere prayers of his devotees and protects them. To be one with God is the goal of the soul. He is present in our hearts but we can only know Him by the grace of Guru."²

¹ A History of India, Book I, P 224-225.
² Guru Nanak Dev 'Life and Teachings', P 314-315.
Man has to develop the latent divine nature within Him so that he may become one with God. The aim of human life is the attainment of that blissful union. The man is hampered in this task because he is caught in whirlpool of passions and base desires born out of worldly attachments and allurements. The result is that the lower-self overpowers and egoism shuts out the divine light. A time comes when some catastrophe befalls him and man is filled with fear for his safety. Traditionally speaking, when he finds himself utterly helpless, he realises that he is in the hands of a mysterious superpower who is moulding the course of events. This fear is the beginning of wisdom because it rescues man from his own clutches and makes him listen to the voice of his higher self, turning him towards God, who is all powerful and merciful.

Baba Nanak highlighted the brighter aspect of suffering—pain that purifies the mind. In Asa Di Var, P 469, he says, "Suffering is turned medicine, the pleasure, the melody; where pleasure is, devotion is not, thou the creator, no power to do anything have I". ¹

Prof Kartar Singh in his book Guru Nanak Dev, Life and Teachings writes, "Indeed, Guru Nanak says again and again that without the fear of Lord, Love for Him cannot arise and grow in the heart of man. Be it remembered, however that this fear is not a depressing, deadening, benumbing repelling sentiment but

¹ Translation of Guru Granth Sahib By p 995.
Gurbachan Singh Talib,
one which fills man with a longing to run to the bosom of the Queller of all fear, the Almighty father who alone can give him every protection. Reverence and awe are the chief components of this fear. They lead to love. Ultimately all fear disappears. Love becomes all in all. Love fills him through and through. All evil then departs from his heart. No evil can now touch him. By meditating on Hari, by living in total union with Him, the devotee becomes Hari, no difference, no distance, and no separateness are left. The two become one. Man becomes as powerful as God, but also as full of divine pity, sympathy, love and compassion, as the Beloved Lord. In fact, he thinks not of the power that union with the Almighty gives him, but only of the duty of love towards his fellow creatures which that union entails. He can sin no more".¹

Guru Nanak laid emphasis on the strict observance of the following :-

(a) To live by one's own honest earning.
(b) Nam or singing the praise of God.
(c) To share with the needy.
(d) Ashnan or daily bath to keep the body clean.
(e) Seva or service of humanity.
(f) Simran or constant prayer for the deliverance of soul.²

PART 'D' : POSITION OF DANCE DURING PRE-GURU NANAK PERIOD

4.4.1 EPIC PERIOD:

In traditional Indian performing arts there does not exist a very great difference between music and dance. The art of dance is basically a musical one. Ramayana and Mahabharata are the greatest war poems of the country. In these works there are references to dance, song and instrumental music in almost every section. Music was specially respected in the period of Ramayana. When Rama organised 'Asvamedha Yagya', there is reference to singing of Ramayana in 'Swar and 'Tal' for which skilled musicians were invited.\(^1\)

4.4.2 GUPTA PERIOD 320 AD - 600 AD:

Gupta period which is known as the golden age, the arts flourished and reached the pinnacle of glory. There was exchange of culture with foreign countries, since the percussion instruments were highly propagated, the art of dance with full fledged 'tala reached the zenith of progress during this period.\(^2\)

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1. Indian Concept of Rhythm, P 3.
2. Ibid, P 6-7.
4.4.3 REIGN OF HARSHAVARDHANA (606 AD-647 AD):

King Harshavardhana himself was an accomplished playwright and musician with full knowledge of ragas and riganis' with appropriate rhythm pattern. The king patronised musicians and artists and the currents of Indian music flowed into foreign lands.

4.4.4 647 AD - 1000 AD:

During this period annexation of kingdoms, warfare, disunity among the Rajput princes due to their greed led to great unrest and insecurity. The position of music suffered a great setback under these conditions.1

4.4.5 MUSLIM PERIOD:

Though Natya sastra of Bharata was composed during the period of Mohammad Gazni, however the status of music specially Hindu music had a downfall with the coming in of the Muslims to India. The status of music during the rule of prominent dynasties is given below.2

4.4.6 TUGHLAK DYNASTY (1320 AD TO 1412 AD). Music flourished during the period of Gayasuddin Tughlak and his son Mohammad Tughlak , both were its patronisers. There were music concerts in which artists from all communities were encouraged to perform. Muslim women had a great

1. Indian Concept of Rhythm, P 7.
2. Ibid, P 7 and 8.
love for music, however the purdah system had an adverse influence on them. Since the rulers were Muslims, popular songs were composed in 'Gazal', 'Qawali', 'Dadra' etc with new patterns of rhythm, especially for percussion instruments.  

4.4.7 LODHI DYNASTY. The rulers of this dynasty encouraged development of art and music. There were number of muslim artists of repute who worked assiduously in the field of music duly assisted by Hindu artists. The muslim artists who had brought the Arabian culture with them attempted to mix it with the Indian music so as to totally predominate it. However, in order to preserve the core of the ancient traditions of Indian music, the Hindu artists resisted such attempts. During this period, 'Khayal', 'Qawali', 'Gazal', 'Thumari' etc became popular styles of group singing. For maintaining the tempo of group singing large sized dholaks and drums were prepared. New dances depicting stories from Arabia and Iran were composed. The romantic dances were very popular amongst the common folk including Hindus. The Arabian and Iranian culture was also presented in these dances. Hindus, though dazed to witness these dances, yet very much liked the intoxicating

1. Indian Concept of Rhythm, P 8.
atmosphere generated by them. Sikander Lodhi (Son of Balhol Lodhi) appreciated Indian music. Though he himself had no knowledge of music yet he used to respect the artists and Indian music made considerable progress during his reign. New gazals and Khayals were composed and new books on music were written.¹

4.4.8 BABAR'S REIGN. Babar was a great musician and a proficient singer. He respected both musicians and singers. He believed that music had tremendous power and effect. During the battle of Panipat, his war music was sensational. Dances also progressed during this period. However, Babar despised Indian dances, the reason probably being that neither he could understand these nor had adequate time to study these intimately. Babar was extremely fond of Arabian and Turkish dances. Khayal and qawali were very popular during this period. Romantic songs were sung for the warriors returning to their camps after a long day's battle. They were given such a doze of romantic music that their tiredness vanished in no time.²

4.4.9 HUMAYUN'S REIGN. Humayun held musicians in great esteem. He was fond of songs with themes close to daily life as well as those sung in praise of God. He was devoted to songs depicting sublime love of humanity and would

1. Indian Concept of Rhythm, P 8.
listen to these songs with great concentration. Humayun was very fond of music till his death. It can be stated that if he had spare time he would have definitely contributed immensely towards the field of art.¹

4.4.10 GURU NANAK'S PREACHINGS THROUGH MUSIC:

Guru Nanak preached through the medium of song and dance. The standard of music which had considerably deteriorated in Punjab under the Muslim Rule was boosted by Guru Nanak by singing the praise of God through bhajans.

Dr. Trilochan Singh in his book 'Guru Nanak's Religion - A comparative study of Religion', writes, "Guru Nanak, who called himself a bard, composed his hymns in 19 ragas (musical modes), accepted the fact that spiritual life expresses itself in art, poetry, philosophy, music and the symbolism of beauty but he emphasised that religion is the highest faculty. It is the stage in which all sides of our consciousness are represented. Although art, poetry, music and philosophy by themselves cannot help man to acquire perfection of the mind and spirit, however, those religions which ignore these remain cut off from the spirit of Truth and the light of 'God'".² Guru Nanak in his compositions

described music as a means of attaining temporal happiness and spiritual joy. It is for this reason that he used to sing hymns composed by himself with the accompaniment of Rabab played by Mardana who was his constant companion as well as an ardent devotee and disciple.

Baba Nanak professed that the intensity of love towards God must be increased by all means. This will assist in reducing 'ego' in man and enable the love towards God grow in him. In order to increase the love of God, His praise should be sung, as it is through music that the soul is lifted into a mystic union with God. The devotee forgets his physical barrier and surrenders himself to God. When the music softens the mind, the ego is destroyed and one feels approaching God and realization of 'Nam'. While in Baghdad when Guru Nanak and his party used to sing the praise of God every morning, this was objected to by Pir Dastgir, as music is prohibited in Islamic law. Pir Dastgir occupied an important spiritual position. He himself went to Baba Nanak to argue against this practice. The following dialogue between the Pir and Baba Nanak will throw light on the high esteems in which Baba Nanak held the art of music.

Pir : Music makes a man's mind mercurial and wayward. It diverts man's mind towards vice.

Baba Nanak : Music does not make a man mercurial. On the other hand it helps in concentration. On hearing music, the mind is softened. It melts the heart and makes it compassionate and loving and such a mind can be given any desired shape. Music produces emotions in men and inspires him to do noble actions. It also purifies cravings.

Pir : Has God made music?

Baba Nanak : Yes, it is a gift of God. Man has not made it but has discovered it.

Pir : Rabab, Sitar and other musical instruments have been made by man, without them there can be no music.

Baba Nanak : Nature is full of music. There is music in flow of water and the waves of the sea. Birds sing sweet notes, sound coming out of man's throat produces music. Ears have been made to appreciate music.
Pir : Music has added to the indulgence of men. It resides in the houses of immoral people. It has produced beggars and prostitutes.

Baba Nanak : It is not the fault of music. It possesses immense power of changing the attitude of men. Even poisonous snakes are enchanted by it. Pure and wordless music is the inner voice of man. Ideas are expressed by language but emotions are expressed by music. Emotions expressed in music combined with ideas given in language make a potent force. Some people have degraded music by mixing evil ideas with it through foul language. However, others have elevated it by putting good ideas in it. Romantic poetry is example of the first and the scriptures are the instance of the second. The Islamic law prohibits first kind of music and not the second. The defect, therefore, lies in the language mixed with it and not the music. It is the cloth that is undesirable and not the pearl. Don't you praise, admire and adore God.
Pir : Yes, we do, That is the chief characteristic of our religion.

Baba Nanak : Admiration is of three types :

(i) We can admire God by thinking about God and concentrating on His attributes.

(ii) We admire God through words and speech.

(iii) We sing the attributes of God and come into emotion.

Third method is the best.

Pir : Can't we do without music?

Baba Nanak : Music is inevitable. It bursts out of man like a fountain. It cannot be stopped. It is spontaneous. Everybody in the world sings. The farmer sings at the handle of plough, the sailor at the oars, the labourer at his action, the girl at the spinning wheel. All sing when they are in mood to sing, if singing is a must then why not sing, what is good and that elevates the man and brings him nearer to God. If you do not sing the praise of God, then the music will be used by people for bad purpose.

4.4.11 IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN THE HYMNS OF BABA NANAK:

At page 347 of S.G.G.S. Guru Nanak in his hymn in Raga Asa has highlighted the importance of singing in praise of the Lord. He states that there should be no house where hymns are not sung in praise of God. The first line of the above mentioned hymn presents this idea which is further explained in the rest of succeeding lines. Our main interest lies in the fact that Guru Nanak considers music and its dimensions as a media valid only for the appreciation of God. He feels that God's appreciation should begin with the playing on musical instruments. Unlimited musical instruments are being played upon his appreciation innumerable ragas tell about the glory of the God. In the fourth line Guru Nanak directly links music with devotional singing and pens down that air, water, fire, dharamraj, chitragupta, shiva, rudra, brahma and many more divinities and ascetics sing in the honour of Lord. Guru Nanak feels that music plays an integral part in devotion to God. Both music as well as devotion to God need a particular type of concentration, inspiration and faith. Another significant point in this hymn is that even abstract things such as water, fire and air are also included in this process of singing. This indicates that Guru Nanak consider singing not only
as rhythmic, sounds uttered by human beings but also finds its deep relationship with metaphysical world. It seems as if it is important to be musical to attain metaphysical from physical world. So music is a media for the attainment of God. We conclude with the following from this explanation:

(i) Music is an inseparable part of Guru Nanak's conceptual world.
(ii) Music is a very important media for the glorification of God.
(iii) The influence of music is desired only in sublime and spiritual yearning.
(iv) The music was an integral part of Guru Nanak's devotion to God.

4.4.12 RELATIONSHIP OF MUSIC AND DANCE:

There is a region beyond verbal meaning into which music directly and immediately transports us. One can say that the impact of the 'word' is mediate while that of 'music' is immediate.

If music accompanies dance and both of them are used to depict a certain feeling or music fills up the gap where the movements and gestures used in dance

1. Indian Musical Traditions, P 6.
fail to narrate a particular emotion. Music provides life to dance and is an indispensable partner of the dance. Similarly where music lacks to convey a particular thought or emotion, the dancer's gestures fill up the gap. In this way dance and music are complementary to each other. Moreover, dance being interpretive, it strives to portray in movements, what the music and songs describe in sounds.

Shri C.P. Khanna in his article titled 'Steps with Indian dance' writes, "The dramatic truth is that India has always danced. It's dance is the embodiment of a whole gamut of Indian expression in all its richness and subtlety in all its extraordinary fantasy and Yogic discipline".¹

The spiritual values like devotion to God, surrender to His will and seeking identity with Him and other spiritual aspirations of human mind are very well represented through poetry, dance and music.² Though Guru Nanak is his hymns has not used the present days coined word 'folk dance', yet he has made numerous references to dance.

¹ Aryan Heritage Vol VIII, March 1991 No 82
² Reading on Music and Dance, P 29.
4.5.1 DANCE AND NATURE:

Dance is the rhythmical physical movements prompted by inner feelings and emotions. The rhythmical movement is also spontaneous in many animals as in the case of human beings. The peacock dances to clouds in rainy season, elephant dances to attract his mate, the snake and bear dance to music. In fact, every human being and animal dances to express his inner most passions. It can be said that there is natural instinct to dance in every living being. Savages and aborginal tribes in various parts of the world also dance to express their inner feelings.¹

Shri Goswami in his article published in the journal "Sangeet Kala Vihar" Oct-Dec 1970, Page 2 writes:

"Dance has been a popular and cultural form of physical exercise-cum-entertainment from the very beginning when man came to dwell on the earth. It can be traced through thousands of years of the country's history, changing in form and technique now and then to suit the demands of time and tastes of people of various epochs".²

¹. Art of Indian Dancing, P 7.
According to Indian thought, origin of everything is associated with mythological sources which are in one way or the other manifestation of supreme energy or say mahashakti. From the energy arises rhythm. Movement creates friction giving rise to sound. The birth of man and nature is closely connected with each other (Pursha and Prakrti).  

The nature has inspired man to the noblest ideals and caused him to worship its forces since the very inception of history of man kind when the ancient thinkers could not give a rational or satisfactory explanation of the forces and powers superior to mankind, they personified these as Gods or Goddesses with certain attributes. For example when they could not find an answer of the source which provided them with air, water and light, they personified them as different Gods viz, Pavana (god of wind), Varuna (god of rain) and Surya Deva (Sun god). Likewise it is said that sound was created by damru of god Shiva and dance emanated from his cosmic movements.  

Shiva is believed to have danced to create the world. He gave regular rhythm to the universe, movement of the sun, moon and the stars and circulation of four

2. Art of Indian Dancing, P 1.
seasons. He created the new rhythm by his body movement. Still more, the world was created by his dancing expressed by his great poses which symbolized the evolution, preservation and destruction. Shiva is thought of as a king of dance, Natraja and his consort Parvati is also thought as a pioneer of dances.¹

Dance consists of artistic expression, tone and time or rhythm, and every form of natural or human activity may have something to contribute towards its making. Every action to it implies some form of emotion and is usually accompanied by some kind of sound.²

4.5.2 GURU NANAK'S VIEWS ON DANCE IN NATURE:

According to Guru Nanak, God is present in nature and Nature depends upon His will. In Asa Di Var Baba Nanak says that God, Himself creates the world and himself gave names to things. He Himself created nature by His power and while seated in nature He watches with delight what He created.³ According to him the spirit of God is continuously present in nature. Nature is dependent upon His will. Nature and human beings

¹. Dances of Asia, P 22.
². Bhartiya Sangeet Ka Itehas, P 16.
³. S.G.G.S., P 463.
depend on Him but he does not depend on men or the nature. In other words, God is the indwelling spirit of creation. Guru exhibited great awe and praise for the work of almighty in creating the nature. He says:

Wondrous Thy Word, Wonderful Their knowledge;
Wondrous Thy creatures, Wonderful their species;
Wondrous their forms Wonderful their colours;
Wondrous the animals which wander naked;
Wondrous Thy Wind, Wonderful Thy water;
Wondrous Thy fire which sporteth wonderously;
Wondrous the earth, wonderful the sources of Production;
Wondrous the pleasure to which mortals are attached;
Wondrous is meeting; wonderful parting from Thee;
Wondrous is hunger, wonderful repletion;
Wondrous Thy praises, wonderful Thy eulogies,
Wondrous the desert, wonderful the road;
Wondrous Thy nearness, wonderful Thy remoteness;
Wondrous to behold thee. present
Beholding these wonderful things
I remain wondering
Nanak, they who understand
They are supremely fortunate.¹

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¹ The Sikh Religion, P 221.
(Translation by Macauliffe)
The nature is bound by rhythm and a rhythemic movement is termed dance. Therefore virtually everything in the universe dances. This thought is echoed in the verse at Page 456 of S.G.G.S., by Guru Nanak where in he says as follows:

"Innumerable whirl winds, tops, churning rods, grain treaders, the winged creatures wheeling without pause, Living being whirled on the pike. All these whirl about; endless in their enumeration. All bound in hands of their deeds are whirling along enacting a kind of dance".¹

This shows Baba Nanak was of the view that dance is an inseparable adjunct of all animate and inanimate objects. Obviously who was lover of nature upto such an grteat extent, could not be averse to dance which is inherent in nature. He was only opposed to particular types of dances which had base elements in them and not to those dance movements which are the result of exalted state of feelings arising out of the love for the Supreme being. When a man feels happy, he exhibits his innermost feeling through rhythmic movements which

take the form of dance. These movements differ according to way of life, occupation and customs, forming the folk dance of different places in a country. Thus Baba Nanak could not be averse to dance which is the innermost urge of human beings. When he finds that every part and nature is dancing on the tune provided by the Creator, that is God, however he was against certain indecencies in dance which I will discuss in subsequent pages.
4.6.1 RITUAL DANCE:

Performance of rituals has a particular purpose or end in view. The ritual dances are primarily meant for propitiation of a deity or dieties. Before discussing ritual dances, it is pertinent to first describe what are rituals and their connected aspects.

4.6.2 WHAT ARE RITUALS? In the layman's language ritual can be defined as the routine of worship. However, the term has larger connotations, that is to say, ritual is an essential part of worship and it is not possible to carry out religious worship without associating some aspects of a ritual. It can be stated that ritual is to religion what habit is to life and its functions are therefore similar. It brings subordinate functions under an effortless rule to permit undivided attention regarding major issues. The main task of routine in religion is to organise the daily activities for its stability and continuance as a social institution so that all available spontaneity and initiative may be directed into spiritual channels.¹

From time immemorial, rituals have had a deep significance on religious consciousness. The procedures of rituals have become deeply enmeshed in

¹. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 9, P 322 B.
the religious acts, and have thus become an integral part of these acts. ¹

There are two aspects of a ritual. First one is that, it goes beyond something more than performing a normal prayer which implies that the individual expresses the desire, hope or expectation of divine favour from a particular deity and consumation sought with the deity is taken for granted. When the act of worship has been performed, the deity is expected to communicate its blessings and grant accomplishment of the desire of the worshipper. The second aspect of the ritual is the identification of the act of worship (the process of performing the ritual), in that the worshipper gets so involved that his body and the act of worship become one.²

According to Longwell "Ritual is preserved because it preserves luck" Since a ritual has inherent sacredness associated with it, therefore it is but natural to associate a specific god with the origin of a particular ritual. Whenever, there is an omission or innovation in the performance of a ritual, these are supposed to be punished by the particular God by withdrawing blessings or perpetrating a disaster on the community. It can be stated that in the

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 9, P 322B-323.
² Ibid, P 323.
primitive society, there is no custom to which sacredness is not attached to some degree, however it is seen that more ceremonial and sacred the usage, the religious conservatism accordingly becomes more rigid. It is believed that in olden days in Australia, despite availability of stone implements, fire sticks were employed to conduct the highly sacred ceremony of circumcision. Subsequently, even in higher cultures also, this operation was executed by stone implements even though iron implements were already in common use.1

4.6.3 INTERPRETATION OF RITUAL. According to W Robertson Smith (Religion of Senites), in primitive religion, it is ritual that generates and sustains myth, sacred lore of course cannot be dispensed with. The typical example is the Australian aboriginal society. The society has just reached the stage of having a priest but it still needs its OKINRABATA or greater instructor. Even though the sole task of this expert is to merely hand in the rules for the performance of religious rites. If sacred history happens to be associated with the lore of that person, he is considered divine and exercises full control on the conduct of the ritual. It is seen that even in the highest religious cultures where orthodoxy holds a prominent place, rituals are

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 9, P 323.
held merely to symbolise dogma and there is a remarkable rigidity about the dogma. This is mainly due to its association with ritual forms, many of them bearing the most primeval stamp. Regarding the symbolic interpretation of ritual, this is held not to be primitive, and it is true that unreflective age is hardly aware of the difference between "Outward sign" and "inward meaning", and thinks as it were by means of its eyes.

4.6.4 CHANGES IN RITUALS. While rituals are highly stable, their nature is not absolutely rigid. Over a period of time, a ritual grows, alters and finally decays. All tribes have an elaborate body of magic-religious rites, however there may be exceptions wherein the disturbance of tradition has taken place due to migration or some similar reason. Thus the growth or evolution of a ritual takes place according to a pre-existing pattern. In primitive times, unconscious evolution has been a more active factor, thus small variations over a period of time bring about a considerable change.

The individual religious genius exercises a large influence. A man of a more original turns of

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 9, P 323.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
mind than his fellows will claim to have had a new ceremony imparted to him by the soul in a vision, and such a ceremony will even be adopted by another tribe which has no notion of its meaning. Meanwhile, since little is dropped while so much is being added the result is an endless complication and elaboration of ritual.

4.6.5 RITUALISM AMONG HINDUS. Ritualism is a prescribed order for performing religious or devotional service and is prevalent among Hindus. A common ritual is the practice of pouring five holy liquids (Panchamatra milk and butter, sugar, honey) over the image and dropping cold water on it from a perforated pot. Thereafter, the goddess is dressed and ornamented with coloured powder and incense burnt. All this takes place among chanting of mantras by brahmins. The washing of idols, then feeding at various times of the day including the sacrifices performed by the Gurkhas at Dussehra festival (during Durga Puja) are examples of ritual.

4.6.6 RITUAL DANCES. Ritual dances are mentioned in Vedas also. During olden days, in Mahavrata ceremony, women danced to celebrate the occasion. Maidens danced around the fire with water pitchers on their heads alongwith recitation of slokas. Water was then poured on the fire which was an act of sympathetic magic

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 9, P 323.
for the rainfall and the song depicted their desire for abundance in milk and plentiful of water for cows. In another ritual, girls danced around the Morjaliya fire, with water pots on their heads, beating the ground with their feet and singing. "This is honey". Again four or eight women danced at the house of the bride to celebrate the wedding. The occasions of ritual dancing are festivals, celebrations, processions, marriages, reunion of friends, first occupation of towns and houses, the birth of children and similar auspicious events. Dances were also performed in honour of chief guests particularly for kings. In wealthy temples devadasis were the permanent employees both for performing dances and taking part in dramas which were presented in temples on certain occasions.¹

4.6.7 GURU NANAK ON RITUAL DANCES. Baba Nanak abhored rituals and was of the view that a man who observes only rituals and does not perform true worship will come to realize that rituals are merely empty acts.²

In the quartet in Rag Asa at Page 356 of the S.G.G.S. Guru Nanak says, "that a person can be said to be learned only when his mind is full of compassion with an urge for service of mankind. A person who has subdued the five evils (Kam, Karodh, Moh, Lobh and Ahankar) can only be said to have succeeded by taking refuge in holy places. When the

². Asa Di Var, P 99-100.
mind is attuned to the Lord, then only there is the real tinkling of ankle-bells in dances which are filled with devotion. When all these things take shape in the human life, even Yama cannot intimidate the man. Baba Nanak in this hymn has emphasised that the mind attuned to the infinite is the true tinkling of ankle-bells in ritual dances which are saturated in the devotion.¹

Guru Nanak says in S.G.G.S., P 470, that a person who believes in only rituals and does not perform true worship, he may read books, perform devotion in the morning and who worships stones utters falsehood, recites mantras thrice a day, puts marks on his head, carries two dhotis and covers his head with a cloth is not a true devotee.² He should know that true worship is only that of the All pervading God. Only then he will realise that all the above rituals are of no use. Guru Nanak says : that every one should remember God with true devotion. Divine knowledge cannot be acquired by performing rituals. A person may perform ritual for hundred years but he cannot obtain the God's grace. It is only through real Nam Simiran with which he can get the ultimate goal in life.²

¹ S.G.G.S., P 356, Ml.
² Ibid, P 470.
MECHANICAL DANCE:

According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Laws, the word 'mechanical' means acting or performing without spontaneity, spirit, individuality such as a mechanical performance of Hamlet, something habitual, routine or automatic or practised to such an extent that the action becomes mechanical, subordinating the spiritual to the materialistic.

Dancing is an instinctive mode of muscular expression of feeling in man and many animals, especially birds. In the social life of the human race it has played a part which touches every activity of the individual and society. Dancing may be described as play in the absolute form. Rhythm is inseparable from its movements as it is from any bodily function and belongs to it. It is rather life expressed in muscular movements.

Dancing in the proper sense consists in rhythmical movement of any part or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme of individual or concerned action. As Aristotle remarked, "dancing is imitative in all its forms, it is an artistic imitation of physical movements expressive of emotions or ideas."
In its simplest terms it has been described as merely the voluntary application of rhythmic principle when excitement induces an abnormally rapid oxidization of brain tissue, to the physical exertion by which the overcharged brain is relieved. Muscular movement of which dance is the most complete expression, is undoubtedly a method of auto intoxication of the very greatest potency. A girl who has waltz for one fourth of an hour is in the same condition as if she had drunk champagne.

Dance is thus a natural method of celebrating anything, and of expressing individual or social emotions or ideas. Primarily mere physical play, it has developed in many spheres, gymnastic and artistic as a pastime and as a sexual stimulus but in social evolution its main applications are ceremonial and the dramatic which of course may include various other functions of dance. Thus in the mimetic dances of the simpler cultures there are combined worship, dance, exercise, excitement, positive play and art. Even some

of the folk dances lay emphasis on performance for the pleasure of participants. They are performed to an accompaniment of sound of the instruments or the clapping of hands.

TYPES OF MECHANICAL DANCES:

4.6.9 SWORD DANCE: Many types of sword dances are performed in most of the Asian countries including India. In Punjab, the sword dance is called Gatka. This is a very strenuous dance and to perform it skillfully, a dancer needs tremendous amount of practice. The dancers take sword in their hands and move in a swift manner, like a machine. In this dance they show various types of acrobatics, including cutting of bananas, wherein the dancer moves all over the stage swiftly.

2. Dancing, P 2.
a very strenuous dance and to perform it skillfully, a dancer needs too much of practice. The dancers take swords in their hands and move in a swift manner, like a machine. In this dance they show various types of acrobatics, including cutting of bananas, wherein the dancer moves all over the stage swiftly, with his eyes closed, he is handed over a sword in his hand. Some persons are made to lie down on floor of the stage with the bananas kept on different parts of their body. The dancer with the closed eyes and sword in his hand cuts the bananas. This dance is performed in other parts of India also where the dancers moves like a machine all over the stage. This type of mechanical dance attracts the public and the dancers are paid handsomely for performing various type of acrobatics.

4.6.10 TAMASHA. Tamasha which means a frivolous show, is another type of mechanical dance performed in various parts of India. Its counterparts are the Bhavai, Nautanki and patra. Tamasha flourished during the Maratha power in the 17th century. It was a form of pure entertainment for the Maratha nobles and soldiers. Over a period of time it has been getting more popular and vigorous. With slight adjustment and sophistication on its form, it has now graduated from the open grounds in villages to the theatres.
In this dance the rhythmic patterns are not intricate as in classical dance, rather common postures and expressions play a major part. The themes of drama are based on folk tales which are full of humour. The style of singing is different from any other form of music. Dholki or Halgi, a two faced percussion instrument accompanies the dance. Other instruments include a one stringed tumtum, a pair of tiny cymbals and a harmonium.

4.6.11 **LAVANI.** This is another type of mechanical dance. In this a story is described through the medium of dance, song and acting. At the end of the dance, the dancing girl goes to the patron and picks up money from his hand.¹

4.6.12 **EIKA.** Eika is yet another type of mechanical dance. It is a dance of the farmers and is performed during the spring season. The dancing group consists of a leader, five to six accompanists and forty to fifty dancers. The Eika party goes around houses in the villages, dancing, singing and playing drums.²

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¹. Dances of Asia, P 60.
². Ibid, P 183.
Thus in Mechanical Dances dancers exhibit different types of skills and there is no element of spirituality. These are for the entertainment of the audience only.
GURU NANAK ON MECHANICAL DANCE. Mechanical dance is again the part of the verse of 465 of S.G.G.S. According to Hindu thought dance is connected with religion and spirituality, but in Ram Lila people simulate Lord Ram and Sita. This sort of drama is done with a view to earning bread. People gather in large numbers to witness the dance which is performed at night, when people are free from work. It is more in the nature of amusement than worship. The dancers make fool of the people by collecting money as donations in the name of God. Guru Nanak deprecated this type of mechanical dancing which is done for earning livelihood and has no spiritual value as it does not help a person to progress in the right direction. Such a dance befools innocent people. Attending such a dance is sheer waste of time. Mere jumping and dancing without righteousness within, is a futile exercise serving no useful purpose for both the performer and the onlooker. These are mere bodily movement without sublimity of innerself. True realization is to be found in one's deeds performed in accordance with the dictates of the God and not in outward show, which is mere hypocrisy. A hypocrite tries to show off that he is virtuous whereas he totally lacks this trait. Such a hypocrite dancer who tries to exhibit
purity is virtually a sinner and his dance, too, fails to convey the divine principle. As per Baba Nanak, it virtually means that those who dance for fun have to wail in the end. Mere jumping and dancing without devotion and love for the God are only human recreation leading to no spiritual gain. In other words dancing should be with intense pure feelings of love for the God. Dancing without soul in it cannot affect the mind which is filled with avarice and delusion. The true devotion is inspired when a devotee dances with the love of God in his mind. The love of God only resides in the hearts of those who have reverential fear of God.

PRETENTIOUS DANCE:

Pretention means full of pretense or pretension or making an exaggerated outward show. Pantomimic and magical dances are example of pretentious dances. The dance of Devadasies, the dance at Shiva temple and a special type of dance performed during Durga Puja can also be classified as pretentious dances. These are briefly discussed below:

PANTOMIMIC DANCE: From the point of view of aesthetics dancing can be described as muscular music. Like music, it expresses primarily itself, secondarily it expresses whatever is within the scope of the material of art. In this secondary function the dancing is called Pantomimic. A good deal of mysticism is attached to pantomimic dances which have had a considerable development in some parts of the world. These represent incidents in the lives of the guardian spirits of the tribe. The protector of the spirit is required to perform the same dances which have been shown to him, wherein he plays the part of the spirit and it is said that he acquires magical gifts such as the 'death bringer' and the 'water of life'.

1. Encyclopedia on Religion and Ethics. P 361. Vol. X.
MAGICAL DANCE: It is believed that dancing by virtue of its vigorous movements can induce vibrations in the environment. This is illustrated by the following two customs prevalent in some parts of the world:

(i) A ball game of the hockey type is played for rainmaking. The rapid movements of the ball and the players are supposed to induce vibrations in the clouds.

(ii) In the second event, to produce a shower of rain, the nominated person goes through a curious process of quivering in his body and legs, while his assistants chant in tune with the movement. This process continues throughout the night and at day break he makes the final and exhaustive effort. These quivering movements of the body are supposed to induce movements in the environment, thereby producing rain.

It is interesting to observe that a religion which has degenerated tends to follow orthodox magical practices more rigidly. The person practising this art is said to be possessing

1. Encyclopedia on Religion and Ethics P 361. Vol. X,
mystic powers and is capable of influencing course of events by occult control of nature or spirits. He can also supposedly do so by witchcraft.¹

In olden days in villages in many parts of India, specially in Punjab and Bihar, when a person fell seriously ill or was bitten by a snake his body was deemed to have been possessed by an evil spirit or ghost. The Tantrik (person possessing mystic powers) was called to drive away the evil spirit or ghost. The Tantrik did so by dancing ecstatically in front of the deity, in the process subjecting the ill-fated person to various forms of torture.

4.6.17 DANCE OF DEVADASIS: In the olden days, women used to be appointed as dancers and court­esans in the greater Hindu-temples. These women were known as devadasis or deveratal. In Travancore, these women were known as 'Kudikkar' meaning those belonging to the house of God. The devadasis used to pretend that they are the 'Slaves of God' and their actions were in the service of the God. The duties of these dancing girls (devadasis) were to fan and feed

¹ Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. 19, P 324.
the idol, to carry the sacred light and to sing and dance before the God when He was carried in procession. They were also called the women of the temple and were provided free quarters within the temple and were given tax free lands and other favours. 

Ironically, prostitution was prevalent amongst these women purported to be in the service of God. They were the dancing girls dedicated to the actual profession or generally married in a temple to a sword or God. The 'Tali' (a gold trinklet worn round the neck as a symbol of marriage) was tied around their neck by some man of their caste. In Western India, these type of women are known as "bhavin" (a handsome capricious woman). Bhavin is an attendant on an idol or a-mistress procuress. On attaining puberty a bhavin girl went through a form of marriage with the God, the rite being performed both at girl's house and in the temple. The bhavins practiced prostitution and differed from common prostitutes only in being dedicated to the God, from her children she chose two or three to succeed her as temple servants.


2. Encyclopedia on Religion and Ethics, P 407-408. Vol. I,
DANCE IN SHIVA TEMPLE: On 14th day of increase of the moon in the month of Phagun (one day before Holi festival in March), a festival is held during the night in honour of Lord Shiva. In the ceremonies, the image of the Lord is bathed four times and four separate temple services are performed during the night. Before the temple, the worshippers dance, sing and revel the whole night amidst the din of music. According to mythology, the occasion of this festival is related to Bhuvishwa Poorna in which a bird catcher detained in a forest during a dark night, climbed a willow tree under which was kept an image of Shiva linga. On shaking the branches of the tree, leaves and dew drops fell upon the image of the deity. People used to pretend that by this action Lord Shiva was very much pleased and they declared that worship of his Linga on that night should be considered as an art of unbounded merit.  

DANCE DURING DURGA PUJA: Another saying goes that during the Durga Puja after the brahmins had been fed and the worship of the day completed, many rich men were supplied with a number of prostitutes. These women dressed richly and covered with ornaments, danced and sang before the idol of goddess Durga. The songs were

exceedingly obscene, the dances highly indecent and the dress of the dancing women extremely inciting. The clothing of the women being as fine as scarcely to deserve the name of a covering. The tresses of some were loose, hanging down to their waists. These dances were for exclusive gatherings, the crowds were kept out by keeping the doors shut. A group of six to eight women assisted by musicians, danced together for couple of hours. Rich spectators when highly pleased during the performance with a portion of the dance or song, threw large sums of money to the dancers and singers. After the performance these women provided service to rich men who made them lavish presents of garments as well as substantial sums of money.\(^1\)

4.6.20

**SYMPATHETIC DANCE:** Some applications of dance are sympathetic in the natural sense without being necessarily magical. It is recorded of old Madagascar that while men are at war and until they return, women and girls cease not a day and night to dance.....they believe that by dancing they impart strength, courage and good fortune to their husbands.\(^2\)

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1. History and Mythology of Hindoos, P 114-115. Vol. III,
2. Encyclopedia on Religions and Ethics, P 361. Vol. X,
GURU NAMAK ON PRETENTIOUS DANCE: Baba Nanak was highly critical of pretentious dancing. In verse 465 of S.G.G.S. he stated that some people pretend while dancing that they are possessed with divine current. They make body movements in a manner to simulate ecstasy which is experienced by real devotees of God. Such pretensions are only made to make an impression on the on-lookers that the dancer has imbibed divine attributes and is intoxicated with divine love. Baba Nanak has in explicit terms deprecated such dances which are meant to deceive the public as it neither helps the dancer nor the onlookers, but it only further deteriorates the social morality.

COMMERCIAL DANCE

In olden times, dance was a mode of worship. Prior to the Muslim invasion of India, dances were only performed in the temples to placate the deities. The dancers danced themselves to a state of ecstasy to attain spiritual union with the God.

As the Muslims came to India, dance became commercialised as they did not believe that this form of art was meant for devotion to be performed in temples only. During their rule, dance became a commercial venture as the dancers
started performing in the Courts of Sultans and Nawabs and were suitably rewarded in kind and cash. The artists in order to earn more and more money, started performing with the only aim of pleasing the audience. In temples, where the dance was performed to please the deities, the dancers used to get only a portion of offerings which were barely adequate to make their two ends meet. By and by, the priests became greedier and took away major portion of the offerings, leaving the dancers high and dry. Since their very survival was at peril, the dancers were left with no option but to perform in the Courts where they could earn handsome money. Dancing thus became commercial. There was also great degeneration in dance form as the dancers with a view to drawing more public to their shows, started singing and dancing on cheap and vulgar songs and tunes. Due to Muslims influence, the religious sentiments vanished. They started dancing with wine glasses in their hands. In order to balance the cups they started giving importance to foot work which made the dance look very attractive. People in general also started enjoying this type of dance. The kings started keeping the dancers permanently on their pay-roll. Their whole family was looked after by kings. Since they
started leading a comfortable life, they preferred dancing in the courts in comparison to temples and the dance took the shape of commercial art. In this form of dance, there was no rasa or bhava which was related to the soul. The dancers were only interested in worldly pleasures, so they composed the themes which were liked by the general audience specially the kings.

Paradoxically, even in Raas Lila in Brij, artists started performing with the sole aim of collecting money and enriching themselves. Raas Lila is performed as a folk drama in many parts of India, but the Raas lila of Brij deserves special mention, as it was here in the home of Lord Krishna, that it was first enacted in its present form and has been danced in an unbroken tradition since the sixteenth century.¹

A special stage is made for Raas Lila where two seats are placed, one for Lord Krishna and the second for Radha. The dance drama has a traditional opening with Radha seated on the stage. In the beginning, traditional devotional songs are sung in the background. Thereafter gopies offer Puja to Radha. They form a circle as Krishna enters the stage.² In Vrindavan, the performance of Raas

¹ Indian Dances, their History and Growth, P 165.
² Ibid, P 165-166.
Lila carries on throughout the night, right till the break of dawn. People are so entranced with the Raas Lila that they remain glued to their seats throughout the performance. During the entire show, the audience are made to believe that the God will appear in these artists and will shower blessings on them. People lavishly throw money on the artists in the hope that they will be bestowed with the grace of the Lord. The artists themselves coax the audience to throw money on the stage otherwise the Lord will not shower his blessings which will adversely effect them and their near and dear ones.

4.6.23

GURU NANAK ON COMMERCIAL DANCE: In the sloka at Page 465 of Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak deprecated the mechanical dancing for earning livelihood. He says that the disciples play instruments and Gurus dance. They shake their feet and roll their heads. The dust flies and falls in their hair. The audience see, laugh and go home. For the sake of earning bread they waste time. Actually the task of the Guru is to instil in the disciple reverence for God.¹

Guru Nanak has mentioned about earning of livelihood through dance, however he does not appreciate it. True teachings should inspire the disciples

¹ S.G.G.S., P 465 M1.
with feelings and thoughts to lead an ideal life and dance should be directed for achieving that objective. The holiness of mind and one pointed attention for achieving higher objectives by love for God should be the sole aim of human beings. But because of selfish approach of man for making money, the education in dance failed to transform the disciple's behaviour in that direction because the Guru's conduct and performance was money making oriented. The result was the negation of mental or spiritual development amongst them. Dance must be saturated with the essence of spirituality. Then only the persons who witness such a dance will be divinised. Dance should be for life and not for a living. It is not earning a livelihood that is important, what matter is the ideals for which one lives. The ideals should be to enable one to manifest the divinity within. Therefore the performance of dance should not be pursued as a means for achieving a livelihood. This is a degrading attitude. All worldly achievements can confer, only limited pleasure. How then, is one to achieve lasting bliss? It cannot be got through outward body movements. It is only, through inner experience that the lasting bliss can be secured. For this
purposes, harmony between thought, word and deed is essential. The dance should not be performed merely for acquiring riches as these are short lived. One should not become slave of wealth. Wealth without character is worthless. The blossoming of one's character leads to radiance in life.
DEVOTION AND DANCE:

4.6.24 DEVOTION: It is defined as "the supreme single pointed attachment to the Lord." It is something sweet, soothing, refreshing and restoring. It should be pure, sincere and intense. God and His wards are inextricably inter-related. The devotion of an individual is open to suspicion if he has love for God but does not pay heed to his words. Desire for God but neglect of His injunctions cannot be the true characteristic of devotion. There is no use of Man's meditation and learning, if his heart is not cleansed of all selfishness and is also not coated with love. It is common for the people to be devoted and think of God in times of distress and need. Such devotion becomes conditional i.e. for purpose of achieving a goal. Such an attitude has an element of selfishness. Selfless devotion (Ananya Bhakti) is that devotion which wants and will, for a union with the Absolute, for its own sake. Devotion does not mean worship of the Lord

3. The Glory of Puttaparthi, P 110.
4. Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1979, P 42.
5. The Glory of Puttaparthi, P 107.
as an emergency measure. It is for this, it is said that real happiness consists in union with the God. Such happiness is different from emotional rapture and is indeed a state of extinction of all otherness. Devotion is complete surrender, not a part-time affair or something taken on credit. Every bit has to be earned and deposited; there are no over-drafts. One easy way of devotion is through love of fellow beings and society. When love for others becomes a life-breath of individuals, they automatically commune with the divine and get all rigour and experience real happiness.

The word devotion is synonymous with spirituality. Spiritual life should not be regarded as living in isolation. Spiritual life enjoins one that he be free from attachment and hatred and look upon all mankind with an integral vision.

GURU NANAK ON DEVOTIONAL DANCE: Devotional singing and dancing has been applauded by Guru Nanak as is borne out by his hymn at P. 991 of S.G.G.S. wherein he says; "How fortunate am I that God has bought me over for a price, as

1. The Glory of Puttaparthi, P 103-104.
a slave. My wages are Master's words and I do what ever I am bidden. What cleverness can the servant show? My mother is a slave and so also my father. I am the off-spring of slaves. My slave mother dances, my slave father sings in devotion to the God and in their company I too sing the praise of the Lord". In this verse mother and father are symbolic terms. Father means contentment, mother means 'Buddhi' (intellect). Where there is contentment, the will to serve others emerges and the right thinking makes a man move according to the dictates of the Lord. In such a state the 'Buddhi' dances the dance of devotion to the tune of contentment in ecstasy. Following conclusions can be drawn from this verse:-

(i) When a man is immersed in the love of Divine, he acts according to the commands of Almighty.
(ii) He achieves contentment which gives rise to the will to serve mankind.
(iii) As one progresses in devotion to the Lord his very being is returned with the cosmic dance which his beloved God is regulating throughout the universe. Thus nature, through number of ways, helps one to unite with his beloved.

1. S.G.G.S., P 991.
DANCE VIS-A-VIS NAM-SIMRAN: In the Ashtapadi in Rag Asa at Page 412 of Adi Granth, Guru Nanak has highlighted the importance of Nam Simran and also makes a reference to dancing. In this verse, he says that all sorrows of a person, who with truthful heart sings the glory of the Lord, are effaced. The real way to rid of sorrows is Nam simran. When one understands the words of Guru he gets the vision of God within, and reaches a state where he plays the music without hands and dances to his glory without feet. When the Lord bestows His grace, a person is free from the fetters of 'Maya' and gets bliss and because of the joy derived from that blissful state of feelings of love for Divine he involuntarily dances, and forgets about the worldly attachment. From this verse we can derive the following conclusion:

(i) Nam simran is the key to the removal of all sorrows in the life of a man. Therefore, dance in itself is not sufficient to achieve this end.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS WITH WHICH DANCE SHOULD BE PERFORMED:

Dance is an instinct, a compelling emotion within us that urges us to find expression in dance that is, outward rhythmic movements. Dance can

be termed as the rhythmic physical movement of the body which is prompted by feelings and emotions. There is a feeling of pleasure as well as satisfaction in these rhythmic movements which exercise the body and at the same time release inner tensions. Moreover these movements can induce hypnotic trances which may have led to the belief that dance had magical powers and consequently it came to be used in early cults and rites for propitiating the Gods and driving away evil spirits. By dancing man expressed himself in a way which he conceived as the most powerful and eloquent means at his disposal. He celebrated by dancing, he gained courage by dancing and often like birds and animals around him he courted with help of dance.¹

Dance is found among all men whether in primitive or advanced societies with its functions varying from religion to pure entertainment. Olden tribes in some parts of the world performed the war dance which is the dance of joy and energy. They also performed the dance of nature to propitiate the divinities in the sun, water and wind and to appease the celestial bodies for progress and good harvest. Funeral dances are still performed

¹ Indian Dances, their History and Growth, P.17.
by Negroes, Eskimos and the aborigines in South America.¹

The essential feature of a dance is the spontaneous movement of the muscles and limbs under the influence of some strong emotion, feeling or passion, such as joy, pleasure, anger or religious exaltation.² The most appropriate depiction of feeling and emotion in a dance is contained in the words "Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram". It means that pinnacle of beauty is 'Shiva' who is the truth. In other words, highest form of beauty is art and that Art and beauty is personified in the form of God Shiva who is the truth.³

Guru Nanak visualised the impact of dance in the upliftment of mind for progress in spiritual field. In his verse Asa Ml at Page 350 of S.G.G.S., he emphasises the feelings and emotions with which dance should be performed to raise it to the level of spiritualism.

The feelings and emotions in dance have been

1. Art of Indian Dancing, P 7.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., P 1.
expressed by Guru Nanak through 'Pakhawaj' and 'Baja'. Pakhawaj is a percussion instrument which along with other musical instruments forms an accompaniment for performing the art of dance. Guru Nanak has stated that 'Pakhawaj' should represent 'Love' and 'Baja' the intellect and this should be the 'bhakti' and 'tap'. He further states that one should dance fully charged with these feelings in heart which will bring out the true emotions and bliss in the mind of the performer. This he termed as the true devotion. The extended meaning of the hymn is:--

Pakhawaj was the common instrument which formed the accompaniment to dance besides other musical instruments since time immemorial. Guru Nanak says that 'Pakhawaj' should be of emotion and love.

Further in this verse it has been stressed that when both the instruments of pure understanding and drum of love play together in union, one enters the state of bliss. This is the real devotion and penance. In this state of mind when a person dances with measured steps, it amounts to dance with divine attributes, which should be performed during the life time. Only a person who understands the Lord in correct perspective dances in the real
sense of the word. Dance which is full of devotion to God is the real dance.\(^1\)

In reality, during the performance of a dance the song should be sustained in the throat; its meaning should be shown by the eye movement and rhythm marked by the foot work. Where ever there is the movement of hands, there the glances follow; where the glances go, the mind follows: where the mind goes, mood follows where the mood goes there is the flavour (Rasa).\(^2\) There are nine type of Rasas in dance depicting various moods.

Baba Nanak further says that service to mankind and contented life should be the ringing cymbals, constant joy of heart should be the ankle bells, intense love for God should be the music and melody, which should form the accompaniment of the dance. Fear for, and respect for the God in all poses should be the spins of dance and control of senses should be the belly dance. In this way if the dancer dances then he will always be fresh. The 'tals' which are devoid of pure feeling are not the correct ones and only cater to carnal desires. Contentment and truth are like two different 'tals', the rhythm which comes out of the

\(^1\) S.G.G.S., P 350.
\(^2\) Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. 7, P 18.
foot work should take you to the eternal austerity. The 'nad' which is produced should depict only one 'Bhava' that is devotion to God. In the end, Baba Nanak says that gathering should be of learners, whatever you speak at the time of the dance it should look as if it is coming from the mouth of the Guru. All other dances which are devoid of such divine attributes only cater to the lower senses of the mind.¹

When a dance is bereft of holy and sublime approach of mind towards God, it loses the significance of spiritual approach. In such a case there are only body movements without attuning the mind with the God. Such dances serve no useful purpose either for the one who dances or for those who witness such performances. They just enjoy the acrobatics of the dancer and satisfy the recreational urge. Such dances have no meaning in upliftment of the mind and only satisfy the carnal pleasures of mind. To give an example, in the Laiharabo festival in Manipur, the most attractive part is the performance of Moirangparva. This is a tragic love story of 'Khamba' and 'Thoibi' who had married despite opposition but ultimately

¹ S.G.G.S., P 350.
died. The depiction of such a story in a dance would in no way be instrumental in bringing the man nearer to God. Guru Nanak has rightly depriCAfced such dances as these arouse only base feelings in a man.¹

According to Baba Nanak, there is no art unless it awakens and touches the soul. He preferred music to dance for communicating his internal feelings. Guru Nanak had in depth knowledge of the power of poetry, music and dance, and for this reason he chose the medium of poetry and music to convey his spiritual thoughts and teachings. "Guru Nanak could not live without inspirational music coming to him from heaven", says Puran Singh.²

Guru Nanak was conscious of the natural impulses governing human behaviour. Natural urge to depict one's inner feelings of joy and sorrow through body monement viz dance were not alien to him. What he preached was that these urges should not follow a course which is base but should be channelized to attain bliss. In this context he disapproved dances which are performed as mere shows, for collecting money and for satisfying

1. Dance Dialects of India, P 175.
the animal self. He being a great lover of art used it to motivate the people in the upliftment of mind and purifying the self to achieve the real goal of life, which is the realization of the Lord and to merge in Him.