CHAPTER - III

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND OF MODERN PANJABI POETRY
The origin of Panjabi, as the scholars believe, goes back to the 8th, 9th and the 10th centuries to the Yoga Panth that flourished under the leadership of Gorakh Nath (940 -1031). Though, we have not received in the same vocabulary, what they wrote, yet we know that they used literary as well as popular speech and satirized "the indolent aristocrats and hypocritical ascetics of their time." The written poetry in the standard Panjabi, that comes to us was written by the first Sufi Poet, Baba Farid (1173-1265). His Panjabi, in the words of Dr. Mohan Singh, "was the earliest form of North India lingua franca, Hindwi and Multani." The poetry of Farid introduced the Islamic mysticism laying stress on contrition, self-immolation, self-control and human love (Ishaq-Majazi) leading to divine love (Ishaq-Haqiqi). Contrary to Hindu mystical and metaphysical treatment and imagery, the Islamic exposition is full of either emotions suppressed or over-indulged. With Farid's Persian background and acquired Hindu spiritual knowledge, he tried to put forth the ascetic Islamic Sufi principles in the language of the people.

1. V.K. Gokak: Literatures in Modern Indian Languages, p.11.
The poetry of Farid expresses despair. He teaches us to remember God and expresses the fear of death.¹ Life, he considers a bride and the death a bride-groom, that will take away the former after marriage (death).² It is full of confusion, passionate love of man for man, man's ultimate love for God. So his poetry is not romantic, because his main motive was to attain God, to express fear of death and hell. To do good in the world, to indulge in deep meditation and to get rid of greedy and sensuous desires and worldly pursuits.³ He is actually concerned with the plight of the soul which having lost its opportunity of salvation, now regrets the inability to return to the fleshly habitat. In a shloka he says, when a woman is virgin, she is happy; when she is married her troubles begin. Frid she hath this regret she cannot become a virgin again.⁴

Some chivalrous poetry was also written after Farid. This poetry has a romantic bearing. Even the dreadful incidents of war, the face to face fighting of soliders rouses passionate feeling that enthuse new spirit in man. Instead of hating war and its consequences, man gets involved in the brave actions of the warriors and the effect of war does not remain dreadful and cruel.

1. Dr.S.S.Kohli: Panjabi Sahit Da Itihas, p.28.
2. Baba Farid: Shloka.
3. Dr.Gopal Singh: Panjabi Romanchik Kavi, p.87.
In 14th and 15th centuries, saint poets like Jai Dev, Trilochan, Dhanna, Namdev, Beni, Sain, Sadna, Ravidas, Pipa, Rama Nand, Shah Miraji, Shah Murham, Dadu, Mirabai, Surdas and Tulsi Das etc. wrote devotional verse.

Times were fast changing and the Muslims were trying to establish their rule in India. They were using all fair and foul means to spread their religion. And the Hindus of the time had to guard against the conversions of Hindus to Muslims. So, the poetry of this period reflects religious propaganda.

Raja Rasalu, Bikramjit, Salwahn, Hodi, Pingla, Amang Sena, Bhammati, Luna, Sundri, Panj Phulan, Koklan, Chanchal, Kam Kandla, etc. are romantic compositions.¹

Ultimately, with Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, the Panjabi poetry established her firm hold. He made the greatest contribution to Panjabi poetry with "simple devotional verse, expressive and compact, making use of all the folk metres, folk rhymes, folk tales and classical, historical and doctrinal allusions and metaphors."² He fearlessly, for the first time, voiced the grievances of the common people, condemned the oppressors and sided with the oppressed, downtrodden and the neglected. He preached social equality and discarded class distinction. He also "sang of the beauty of nature; of flowers,

---

of seasons, of mountains, and above all of the beauty of soul in man. Guru Nanak is considered a great poet as in his poetry "metaphors and images have a natural blend. Not a single word or a simile has been used without purpose. A few suggestive words contain vast meanings without impairing clarity and reducing the impact of emotions." 

The poetry of Guru Nanak can be sung and expresses the inner emotions of man. So, it is lyrical. It is a source of all pleasures that find artistic expression in it. 

Besides, his poetry has a marvellous "simplicity, humility, directness and fearlessness of treatment. He has made plenteous use of illustrative imagery drawn from familiar objects, relations, literary works and spiritual experiences — an altogether comprehensive allusiveness." It is a proof of his "understanding of the known types of mysticism, the mysticism of Nature of the soul, of emotions (Prema), of Yog, of poised, detached action (Nishkama Karma)."

"In Panjabi, the traditions of religious, lyrical, romantic legendary and balladic output were carried forward by the house of Nanak."

2. Prof. Pritam Singh: Kav Ehara, p. A.
3. Dr. S.S. Kohli: Panjabi Sahit Da Itihas, p.1A.
5. Ibid., p.40.
6. Ibid., p.40.
The other sikh Gurus also composed verses in the tradition of Guru Nanak. These were compiled by the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev (1563-1609) and captioned as the Adi-Granth. Later, additions were made by Guru Gobind Singh, but the works of Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Guru, were not included. Whilst Guru Ram Das had a fine aesthetic imagination, the fifth apostle, Guru Arjun Dev, had everything that made a divine bard. Deep humility and faith characterise his poetry.¹

The poetry of Sikh Gurus is devotional. It takes man as wife and God as husband and thus preaches union between man and God. The sikh mysticism, depicted there, reveals the search of the soul for the spirit of all-pervading God.

Legendary and chivalrous ballads were sung by the folk-artists; and the fifth Guru also attempted devotional verse on the "rhythmic pattern of the ancient ballads - such as 'Vars of Rai Kamaladi', 'Tunda Araja', 'Sikander Ibrahim', 'Lalla Bahlima', and of 'Hasna Mehma', which are long narratives in the native folk ballad metre.

Bhai Gurdas, the eminent sikh scholar who assisted Guru Arjun Dev in the compilation of the Adi-Granth was a great poet (1558-1637) in his own right. His Vars project him as one of the greatest interpreter of the Sikh faith and way of life embodied in the Granth. His striking couplets and metaphors epitomize the wisdom of the holy verses, in caste, in unfaltering Panjabi idiom.²

¹ Dr. Darshan Singh Maini: Studies in Panjabi Poetry, p.3.
² Ibid., pp.3-4.
So, two main tendencies were set forth by the earlier poets. One was Islamic mysticism and the other was devotional Sikh poetry... and alongside of these was the third one that of the folk ballads passed down by the poets¹ of one generation to the next, which remained anonymous and unwritten for a long time.

The next important tradition in Panjabi Poetry is that of chivalrous ballads and love romances. We do not agree with Dr. Mohan Singh that the ballad tradition "goes back to the 7th century, when the armies of Salvahan defeated the hordes of Vikramaditya of Ujjain".² But it appears certain that romances are the outcome of the love poetry of Persian Literature,³ that patterned and effected our poetry of homely imagery. Damodar, Peeloo, Waris Shah, Ahmad Yaar have not only idealised love, but in describing the beauty of lovers, their separation and meetings, the cruelty of fate, the natural and social traditions, have shown a wonderful mastery and hold on language and metaphors that it fills the soul with romantic hues.⁴

Damodar is the first singer of the Romance of 'Heer and Ranjha'. Heer is a representative character of the Punjab of his time, when Hindu and Muslim cultures were mixing together. Peeloo attempted first romantic tragedy 'Mirza-Sahiban'. It was left to Waris Shah to perfect

¹ Dr. M. P. Kohli: Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p. 13.
² Mohan Singh "Diwana": Panjabi Literature, pp. 135-136.
³ Dr. M. P. Kohli: Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p. 3.
⁴ Gopal Singh 'Lardi': Panjabi Romanchik Kavi, p. 94.
Panjabi Romance by writing 'Heer and Ranjha'. "Varis is the
greatest poet of Panjabi and the Heer the finest production." With Varis' dexterous handling, he has immortalized the tragedy
of Heer. A king of Panjabi Romance, he is considered a great
painter of depicting Panjabi men and manners and a prince of
'Baint' metre.

Then came an era of Political and social changes and
the literature of the period was bound to correspond to these
changes. Almost the whole of the 18th century, under the Mughal
Rule and the Sikh Rule experienced them till the establishment
of British Supremacy in the Punjab somewhere in the middle of
the 19th century. Ahmed Shah Durani continued invading India
for thirty years, and this created general confusion and
anarchy. The death of Ahmed Shah gave rise to the organisation
of Sikh Misls and the control of the Sikh Chiefs became more
regular. A sense of insecurity grew in the People of Punjab
till Ranjit Singh rose to eminence in 1799. He gave a uniform
system of government to the Panjabis. But the poets of this
period 'Hasham' (1735-1847) and 'Ahmed Yaar' (1644-1734) clung
to the same old form of love romances.

This poetic tradition was three hundred years old and
continued to be so when the province was annexed by the British
in 1849. The poetry of the period was "modelled and handled
by the folk-poets, who lived, moved, and had their being beyond

p.64.
the pale of western culture. The sufi tradition lingered on and so did the vedantic.

Fazal Shah (1827-1890), and Bhai Bhagwan Singh, romancers followed the footsteps of Damodar and Varis and Bhai Kishan Singh Arif (1839-1900) adopted romantic themes to preach religion and morality. Their poems were written in 'Athwaras', 'Bara Mah', 'Deurh' and 'Dohra'-forms. They used didactic strains and diction and language of their prede­ssors. Another poet, Shah Mohammed (1782-1862) attempted a different theme. He wrote an account of the First Sikh War with the English. He praised the bravery of sikh soldiers, but deplored the indiscipline among the sikh armies and unwise actions of princes and Sardars. He also lamented the loss of Sikh Rule. Other ballads were also written which gave details of the Afgan Wars and the frontier expeditions. They became very popular.

Alongwith the Sikh rise, other forces were emerging in India. The Dutch, who settled in Chinsura in 1575, had lost to the English in 1749. The French and the English appeared on the political scene of India at about the same time. In 1604, the French established the Pondicherry colony and only after two years they took Chander Nagar under their control. But the middle of 18th century, saw all other powers swept away by the English. The English began the expansion

1. Dr. M. P. Kohli: Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p. 5.
of their territory and finally occupied Punjab, despite a courageous and brave fighting by the Sikhs. This battle, Shah Mohammed explained in 'Jang Singhan te Frangian'. By now the whole of Sikh territory was annexed by Lord Dalhousie, who 'coloured red the map of India' as anticipated by Ranjit Singh himself.1

Ultimately, the victory of the British in the uprising or Mutiny of 1857, made the whole of India their slave. This meant numerous changes into the political and social and cultural set-up in India and Indian society. The establishment of a Central Government laid the foundation of new administrative system, and introduced the adjuncts of modern civilization,— the railway, the posts and telegraphs and also the western type of education based on their own system, that had a deep and penetrating impact on the civilization of Punjab.

The Punjab got its stable government and the most important influence on the people was due to the new system of administration embodying principles rooted in western consciousness. "The extensive range of the governmental functions, the uniformity and precision of the system, the operation of an equalizing law produced a sense of unification of the Province."2 The private institutions learnt a pattern from the British government control over education and hospitals. The specialised departments that were created

2. Dr. M. P. Kohli: Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p.91.
affected the public as well as individual in various ways. The government was "a trustee for the people, but not in the sense that it was bound by the will of the people,"\(^1\) Thus, the rulers were to do their duties and obligations for which they were bound according to their own will.

The elimination of lawlessness and the respect by the executive for the authority of judiciary became more and more basis of law and order. The government machinery was getting westernized, the economic organisation of the nation was becoming more and more complex. The increasing mass of legislation on English lines provided legal framework for the administration. The people became familiar with the principle that law was there to secure their rights. Thus, came a sense of equality "that the rich and the poor had been alike in the eyes of law."\(^2\)

Warren Hastings, a strong protagonist of ancient Indian culture founded Calcutta Madrassah in 1781 for the study of Persian and Arabic, and Lord Cornwallis granted permission to Jonathan Duncan of Benaras to open a Sanskrit College there in 1792. Another college, The Fort William College was started in Calcutta in 1800, to acquaint British officers with Indian literature and languages. The most important factor was the advocacy of English education for India by Charles Grant, one

---

of the Directors of the East India Company. Through his influence a clause was included in the India Act 1813 that the Directors will, at least, spend a lac of rupees annually on education.

The period between 1813-15 was a period of persistent controversy between the 'Orientalists' and the 'Western school', in which the former had an upper hand. The controversy ended when in 1815 Lord Hating by a Minute, gave freedom to private enterprise. In the earliest efforts to spread English learning in India, two major influences were at work: one the influence of the semi-rationalist school, which concerned mainly to foster secular training, and the other there were 'missionaries', for whom the English education was important as a vehicle for religious teaching. Another hallmark was made when Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1771-1833) joined hands with David Hare, an English watch-maker and founded Hindu College in 1817 which later became Presidency College in 1855. The Raja was a great reformer and he denounced traditional system of education in favour of the new western learning. The second Missionary College was opened at Serampore in 1818 by Carey, Marshman and Ward. Bishop's College was started in 1820 by Anglicans at Sibpur.

The India Act of 1833 allowed free admission to the missionary societies in India and they began their most hectic activities by expanding missionary schools and colleges. It was also decided that all the funds available for educational purposes should be mainly spent to maintain
schools and colleges of western learning, to be taught through the medium of English. Also Lord Harding decided to give preference, in all appointment to the men who had received western education. It was thus, imposed and made compulsory for anyone, seeking government job, to learn English.

But as we are mainly concerned with the Panjabi Romantic poets in our thesis here, the changes in this province are of utmost importance to us. The first government school in Punjab was opened at Simla in 1848 by Mr. Edwards and another at Hoshiarpur by Col. Abbott in the same year. With the annexation of Amritsar, Amritsar Government School was started there in 1851, and by 1854, the city had eight schools under the government control. The subjects that were taught in these schools included English, Geometry and Geography. A separate department of Educational Administration was set up with E.D. Arnold as its first Director in 1836. The aim of this Directorate was "the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe."

The movement to establish Panjab University was started by Dr. G.W. Leitner, the Principal, Government College, Lahore. Before this university the state got its share of the western education through the Calcutta University for which Mahendra College, Patiala, and Government College, Lahore used to prepare students. The objectives of establishing Panjab University were the revival of oriental learning, the advancement of popular

2. Ibid., p.18.
knowledge through the medium of vernaculars, the promotion of social, literary, scientific and political interests by the association of the learned and influential classes with the government. It was thus, a reaction to the Bengali Anglicisation. Panjab University College came into existence on January 11, 1870, which was later raised to University level in 1882. Both English and Vernacular languages got recognition, but English became the medium of instruction and examinations in all the subjects organised on the western model. Thus, it became the teaching body, the examining body and a sort of literary society.

As already mentioned, the Charter of 1813 opened the gates for the Christian Missions to spread their religious preaching. In 1833, the Christian Missions of the world were allowed to start their work and the American, the English and many other Mission societies started functioning. This missionary movement in the Panjab was started in 1834 with the formation of the Associated Presbyterian Mission at Ludhiana. With the arrival of Rev. John Lowrie there in November, 1834, the Political Agent Capt. Wade transferred to him Anglo-Vernacular school to be renamed by him as Mission School. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was impressed by the popularity of this school and invited Lowerie to start a school to educate the nobility. But the plan could not be materialised as the teaching of the Gospel side by side with literature and science,

2. Bruce: A History of Panjab University, p. 23.
3. History of A.P. Missions (1886), pp. 4-5.
was not acceptable to the Maharaja. Many other such schools were opened: at Jullundur City in 1846; at Ambala City in 1848; in Lahore in 1849. Beside these schools a number of colleges were also started: like Loreman College at Lahore (1864), Gordon College at Rawalpindi (1833), Murray College at Sialkot (1890), and many others appeared at various places. Now the missions penetrated into the remotest corners and began their organised operations through social as well as educational contacts. They got their Christian books translated into vernaculars and disseminated the western manners and ideas. It appeared as, "the Christ that has come to us is an English man, with English manners and customs about him, and with temper and spirit of an English man in him," cried K.C. Sen, a Brahmo-Samaj leader. This aggressive campaigning of western manner, created antipathy towards christianity among the middle classes. Now the Indians were prompted to defend their religion against the provoking onslaught of Christianity and revive the glory of their ancient culture. Thus, the chief movements followed these Missions in method and manner of work to launch a counter attack.

The first positive influence of Christianity is reflected in the Brahmo-Samaj with its faith in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. It was "a fine blending of Vedanta, Christianity and the western utilitarianism". Raja Ram Mohan

1. History of A.P. Missions (1886), p.27.
2. O'Melley: Modern India and the West, p.675.
3. Aurobindo Ghose: Renaissance in India, p.47.
openly admitted that doctrine of Christ was more conductive
to moral principles and better adapted for the use of rational
beings than any other faith.\(^1\) A branch of the Samaj was started
in Lahore in 1863 and S.Dyal Singh Majitha (1849-1898) came
under its influence.

Arya Samaj was founded in Bombay and Lahore in 1875 and
1877 respectively. It was an avowed antagonist of Christianity
and was designed to withstand the Christian attack on Hindus
and also to launch a counter attack on it. The founder of the
Samaj, Swami Dayanand (1824-1884) denounced the corruption of
the priestcraft and wanted to restore the authority of the
\(\text{Vedas}.\)\(^2\) He understood the Practical value of western science
and education; and his followers started at Lahore in 1889
the D.A.V. College to perpetuate his memory.\(^3\) The primary
object of the college was to "weld together the educated and
the non-educated classes by encouraging the study of national
languages and western science."\(^4\)

Among the Sikhs, "The Nirankari" and the "Namdhari"
were the earlier reform movements that opposed the new light
brought into India by English education. They wanted to reform
Sikh Panth with the help of Gurbani and Gurmukhi. Now the
Sikhs felt that the whole panth should be organised.\(^5\) Another
reforming movement was the Singh Sabha founded in 1873 at
Amritsar. Professor Gurmukh Singh wrote to Kanwar Bikram Singh

\begin{itemize}
\item \(^1\) J.N.Farquhar: Modern Religious Movement in India, p.32.
\item \(^2\) Griswold Indian Evangelical Review, Jan., 1892. Cf. Farquhar, p.113.
\item \(^3\) Bombay Guardian, Reported Speech of L.Sain Dass on
Nov.30, 1907 quoted by Farquhar, p.126.
\item \(^4\) Lajpat Rai: The Arya Samaj (1932), pp.205-6.
\item \(^5\) Dr.S.S.Kohli: Panjabi Sahit Da Itihas, p.170.
\end{itemize}
about the objectives of this movement: To produce national literature in the Panjabi language, to give religious and commercial education to the Sikhs, to stop the deterioration of Sikhism and to make the sikhs strictly adhere to the principles of their faith, and to work in cooperation with the British government.¹ Prof. Gurmukh Singh also asserted his influence in starting the Panjabi classes at the Oriental College in 1877 and founded the Lahore Singh Sabha with its affiliation to that of Amritsar. And thus, the Central Body at Amritsar became the 'Khalsa Diwan' that opened the famous Khalsa College in the city in 1892 along with other schools and colleges that were started in the State. For the time being, mutual conflicts hampered the growth of Singh Sabha, but later it accelerated its activities to purify Sikhism. It started a weekly 'Khalsa Samachar' in 1899 under the editorship of Dr. Charan Singh. 'Khalsa Tract Society' was the outcome of his special endeavours and it is no exaggeration that great writers like Dr. Bhai Vir Singh, Giani Gian Singh, Giani Jodh Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik and Vidhata Singh Teer were the product of this movement.²

The other movements that played a significant role in spreading modern education were, the 'Dev Samaj', founded in 1887; the 'Ahmediya' founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (1835-1908), 'Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam' founded in 1885 and the 'Sanatan Sabha' founded in 1895.³ These movements led to the opening of

3. Dr. M. P. Kohli; Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p. 15.
of the educational institutions of the western type as an instrument of religious propaganda as the "Missions" were doing. By the close of the first decade of the 20th century, ten colleges had been affiliated to the Panjab University. These colleges created an atmosphere favourable to spread of western culture in many forms.¹

With the advent of Europeans on the Indian soil, the leaven of the thought of Bacon, Milton, Locke, Burke, Wordsworth and Byron began working in the minds of Indian people, who had age-long ideals of submission and renunciation and not those of freedom and individual initiative. The influence of this new current of thought powerfully reflected itself in educational system.² Now the need was to begin "an endeavour to formulate a great synthesis of the two cultures, bringing on the forefront a synthetic renaissance."³ It was revealed to the western world, through the work of 'orientalists', that there was also a culture outside Greece and Rome. Consequently, the foreign scholars were amazed at the vast treasure, and the Indians too harked back to ancient greatness with pride.⁴

Political Nationalism in India owes much to the history and literature of English people. With this developed "a feeling of patriotism, political unity and national identity transcending

1. Dr. M. P. Kohli: The Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p.15.
2. Ibid., p.16.
4. Ibid., p.108.
For the first time it was seen that after forgetting all distinctions of caste, creed and religion, the working men bravely rose to the occasion and this is reflected in the Peasant Movement, Gadar Movement, in the incident of Jallianwala Bagh and in Akali and Congress Movement. Even in Akali Movement a number of Hindus and Muslims took part, because at that time the Akali Movement and Gurdwara Sudhar Movement were full of patriotism. Along with the receptivity of western ideas and practice, the international awareness was increased. The Czar Revolution of Russia in 1907, The Sinn Fein Movement founded by Arthur Griffin in 1905 in Ireland, the struggles for freedom in Turkey and Poland were greatly inspiring to be educated Indians.

"Just as the western Europe woke from the lethargy of the middle ages and turned to the literatures of Greece and Rome for models of thought and style, so India was roused from its intellectual coma by contact with the west and turned to western literature, science and philosophy for cultural inspiration." This opinion of O'Melley is of a considerable value.

1. Dr. M.P. Kohli: The Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p.16.
3. Dr. M.P. Kohli: The Influence of the West on Panjabi Literature, p.17.
But it may be added that during the second half of 19th century, the Panjabi poets or even the vernacular poets did not produce anything secular or that can be termed as a great work of literature. The general transformation was brought by the study of English literature that brought about changes both in form and in substance of Panjabi poetry, created new values and patterns for the poets to follow. New themes, new vehicle of expression, new form of composition, new metres and new imagery were introduced in our poetry and the poet's obsession with the religion and methodology took wings. The short lyrical form of poetry was introduced and henceforth, the Panjabi poets became personal and subjective in expression. Almost a new awareness was created among the intellectuals in Punjab. The poems of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, all English romantics, and the novels of Scott, Dickens, Lytton, were largely read.¹ This knowledge was supplemented by the working of numerous literary and cultural societies. The aims of these societies were to organise the enlightened intelligentia, and work for the diffusion of western learning and the improvement of the vernaculars.²

Apart from the impact of English poetry, 'The Singh Sabha Lahar', and Newspapers and journals also helped to a great extent in shaping modern Panjabi poetry. The printing press was installed in 1850-60. Short poems written on ordinary things were printed

and largely circulated to be read by the literate public. This encouraged poetic composition and helped new Panjabi poetry to develop.¹

Side by side a new social middle class consisting of new recruits in the higher grade of Public Services was coming up. This was a new white-collar bureaucracy, who dressed in the western style; followed the Club life; played English games and purchased western furniture for their houses. They became anglicised under the patronage of the rulers, who created a new westernised atmosphere. "All this brought about an upsurge of the cultural ferment that led to the consequent effervescence of new Panjabi literature."²

With the rise of new capitalist class, a sense of individuality arose and developed among masses. And in the poetry of this period much is composed to express personal feelings. The objective ideas were replaced by subjective feelings in poetry, which now expressed personal gain or loss, pleasure or pain or a mental state of the poet.³

Also, the meeting of the East and the West had created a provocative situation. The Indian response was bipolar. On the one hand, there was the urge to look forward, to change and break with what had been; on the other, a tendency to look

1. Dr. Dharam Pal Singal: Panjabi Kavita Da Vikas, p. 57.
backwards, to bring forth the best that there ever was and to reconstruct what had become effete and decrepit. The balance, was however, maintained through Indian Civilization's eternal capacity for synthesis and survival. A period of emancipation and fertilization had indisputably begun. Vital forces of reform and transformation came into play. Age-old attitude altered giving birth to new artistic, literary and social ideas.¹ The man who grasped the full implication of the prevailing urges and impulses and brought about this transformation in Panjabi poetry was Bhai Vir Singh. In his sensitive soul was shaped a subtle and vital response to the stirrings of the time.²

¹ Harbans Singh: Bhai Vir Singh, p.5.
² Ibid., p.1.