Chapter – 2

THOUGHT CONTENT OF GURU GRANTH SAHIB AND BRAJ LITERATURE

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different categories of Bhakti movement i.e. Nirguna and Saguna. However, the contrast between them is not as neat as this taxonomy would imply. Spatial contiguity of the followers of these different categories created scope for both encounters and negotiations—a process that was further intensified by new strategies of religious propaganda carried out by the peripatetic groups of Saints, Vaishnava and Yogis. In this new complex scenario, Nirguna and Saguna differences frequently lost their determinative potential and were superseded by conflict over the use of shared symbols and other religious-cultural forms.¹ They are allied with each other on the basis of certain shared emphases: Recognition of the both states, Nirguna and Saguna of the Lord; believe in the fact that Jiva (creature) and World are the creation of the God; about the influence of Maya on the Individual's; the necessity of devotion, the repetition of the Divine Name, importance of Guru, condemnation of caste pride; stress on discountenancing Yogic practices and importance of Satsang. For their better understanding, it is essential to analyse their thought content.

Guru Granth Sahib is the name given to the ‘Holy’ scripture of the Sikhs. Guru Granth Sahib is the treasure of Bhakti literature,

¹ Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, “Beyond Theological Differences : Sant- Vaishnava Interaction in Medieval India”, p. 66.
poetry and spiritual elevation for mankind. It is a unique and multiracial Scripture. The essence of its ideology is to integrate humanity, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Dharmpal Maini, a scholar trained at Banaras Hindu University, argues that the Adi Granth, “is a firm milestone of Indian spiritual literature”, and cannot be considered a “sectarian document.”

Primarily its name was ‘Pothi Sahib’. Guru Arjan used to say that know the Pothi in the place of the Ultimate One. During the period of Guru Har Rai it was called as Granth Sahib which means ‘The Holy Book’. Granth Sahib named as ‘Guru Granth Sahib’ when Guru Gobind Singh conferred permanent guruship to it in 1708. This tradition of elevating the ‘Granth Sahib’ to the ‘Guru Granth Sahib’ is authenticated by the two major sources of the first half of the Eighteenth century, Sainapat’s ‘Sri Guru Sobha’ and Koer Singh’s ‘Gurbilas Patishahi 10’ and by two sources of the second half of the Eighteenth century Kesar Singh Chhibar’s ‘Bansavali Nama Dasan Patishahan ka’ and Sarupdas Bhall’s ‘Mahima Parkash’. Bansavali Nama states that after the compilation of Dasam Granth in order to distinguish it from Dasam Granth it was named Adi Granth.

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4 ये होता है व्याख्या || Guru Granth Sahib, Sarang Mahala 5, p. 1226.
8 Ratan Singh Jaggi, Itihas Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 28.
means that which is in the beginning or the first. Thus Adi Granth means the First Text. Dasam Granth was the composition of Guru Gobind Singh and his court poets.9

The tradition recognizes three main version of Guru Granth Sahib. These are 'Bhai Gurdas Vali Bir' or 'Kartarpuri Bir', 'Bhai Banno Vali Bir' and 'Damdami Bir'.10 The Rahitnama of Chaupa Singh a prominent member of the Sikh court at Anandpur, is the earliest document to refer to the history of the Guru Granth Sahib. He traces the creation of the Guru Granth Sahib to the decision of Guru Arjan and attributes a key role in the compilation of the original Text to Bhai Gurdas.11 It was completed in 1604 and formally installed at the Harmandir Sahib.12 According to Sikh tradition, this Pothi came to Kartarpur along with Guru Hargobind when he left Amritsar and moved to Kartarpur due to the hostile relations with the Mughals.13 This was usurped by Dhir Mall, son of Baba Gurdita (who was the elder son of the Sixth Guru and heir apparent to the Gurugaddi after him) after the death of Baba Gurdita so as to assert his claim to the pontificate.14 This Pothi is currently in the custody of Karamjit Sodhi, a descendent of Dhirmal, at Kartarpur15 in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

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10 Piar Singh, Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy, Anant Education and Rural Development Fundation, Michigan, 1996, p. 33
13 Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of Sikh Scripture, p. 60.
14 Piar Singh, Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy, p. 10.
Second recension is ‘Bhai Banno Vali Bir’. Sarupdas Bhalla narrates that soon after the original Bir was completed, Bhai Banno obtained Guru Arjan’s permission to take it to his village with the intent to prepare a copy for him. He prepared a copy of the Holy Scripture. The newly completed manuscript, along with the original was presented to Guru Arjan, who gladly confirmed its authenticity by putting his attestation on the manuscript.\textsuperscript{16} Bhalla calls it the Khara recension (Khare Ki Misal) naming it after Bhai Banno’s village Khara Mangat.\textsuperscript{17} Sri Gurbilas Patishahi 6 narrates a different story about the compilation of Bhai Banno’s Bir. It states that Guru Arjan asked Bhai Banno to take the original Granth to Lahore for binding. During this trip to Lahore, Bhai Banno arranged to have a copy made without the prior permission of the Guru. Guru Arjan did not approve of this recension and called it Khari Bir (salted edition).\textsuperscript{18} This recension has seven extra hymns which are not included in original Granth. Four of them appear within the main body of the Text. These are attributed to Guru Arjan in Raga Ramkali; to Bhakt Kabir in Sorath; to Mirbai in Raga Maru and to Surdas in Raga Sarang. The remaining three appear in the final section in which two sets of Shlokas and the Ratanmala are attributed to Guru Nanak and the Haqiqat Rah Muqam Rajeh Shivanabh Ki and Siahi Ki Bidhi are without attribution.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Sarupdas Bhalla Mahima Prakash, Bhag Duja, Khand 1, ed., Dr. Uttam Singh Bhatia, Punjab Language Department, Patiala, 1971, p. 361.
\textsuperscript{17} Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of Sikh Scripture, p.70.
\textsuperscript{19} Piar Singh, Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy, pp. 33-34.
This recension remained at *Khara Mangat* with *Bhai Banno's* descendants before partition. The partition of Punjab led to the family's departure from their village; the manuscript was housed temporarily at Amritsar and at Barauta (district Meerut), before arriving at its present location at Kanpur.  

The third and the final version of the Guru Granth Sahib was prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the direction of Guru Gobind Singh. This version contains the hymns of Ninth Guru (Guru Tegh Bahadur). Kesar Singh Chibbar reports that Guru Gobind Singh did not included his compositions in Guru Granth Sahib by considering them his "light-hearted activity" (*Khed*) and Guru Granth in his view was the "real Scripture". This recension is known as Damdami Bir for its compilation at a place called Damdama Sahib which, at present, is identified by some scholars, with a place at Anandpur Sahib and by others with Talwandi Sabo. G.B. Singh in his work 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib Dian Prachin Biran' holds the view that Damdami Bir took its final shape at a place called Damdama Sahib in Anandpur and not at Talwandi Sabo. Pashaura Singh in his work 'The Text and...

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20 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p.79.
22 रोहफ भक्तकि जी "घर अज रहें मे घर बनेगा, लिखियो भिलाजी समर्पित अंडे मी बीजो।" 

вшего तिलखाँ! "से समय ते हैं सर्व दृष्ट कौशिक की विलक्क देख चाचीगे लक्ष लीडी।" 

समर्पित समर्पित लीडी : "आदि बूढ़ दे बंगुँद।"

टेंड भागाघी दे वेढ़, तृण भरा मंड। 

23 Piar Singh, *Gatha Sri Adi Granth and the Controversy*, p. 34.
24 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 28.
Meaning of the Adi Granth' also agrees with G.B. Singh's view. Giani Gian Singh's account holds the view that it is compiled at Damdama (Talwandi Sabo) a place near Bathinda.

Upto 1864 the manuscripts of Guru Granth Sahib remained handwritten. In 1864-65 Lal Harsukh Rai, the proprietor of the Kohinur Printing Press, Lahore, printed the Damdami Bir. By the end of the Nineteenth century the major work of publication had moved to Amritsar. The first edition of Guru Granth Sahib at Amritsar was published at Vazir Hind Press in 1902. The publication effort of the Sikh community eventually became centered there and a publishing house called Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh becomes the major producer of the Guru Granth Sahib. Shrimoni Gurudwara Parbadak committee published Guru Granth Sahib's one volume edition firstly in 1952. All the printed copies of the Guru Granth Sahib are based on Damdami Bir. In the present work the printed version of the Damdami Bir is used which is published by Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh publishing house at Amritsar.

In the 1990s the Text of the Guru Granth Sahib also become available in a digital format produced by a variety of individuals and

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25 Ibid., p. 31.
28 Ibid.
organizations for example *IK Oankar Bani System* (1994) developed by Balwant Singh Uppal; Scripture and the Heritage of the Sikhs (1995), a CD-Rom by Preet Mohan Singh Kapoor and Bhupinder Singh; *Gurbani CD* (1995), a CD-Rom developed by Kulbir Singh Third; *Gurbani Researcher* (1998), a CD-Rom developed by Joginder Singh Ahluwalia; *Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (1998), a CD-Rom developed by Raghbir Singh Banis. In 2012 an application *Sikh World* is developed from where the whole Guru Granth Sahib can be downloaded with commentary and English translation. For this purpose site [www.IK13.com](http://www.IK13.com) is also useful.

The influence of Singh Sabha Movement is responsible for the commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib. First complete commentary on Guru Granth Sahib in Punjabi was prepared by Giani Badan Singh under the influence of Maharaja of Faridkot. This work was completed in 1833 but published later in 1918. This *Tika* (commentary) was known as *Faridkot Vala Tika*. The commentaries of Giani Narain Singh Mujangwale and Giani Bishan Singh Lakhhuwal are also important. In 1877 Earnest Trumpp tried to translate the Guru Granth Sahib in English with the title 'The Adi Granth' or 'the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs'. This translation is incomplete and has many discrepancies. The other English translations include Gopal Singh's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', 4 Vols; Monmohan Singh's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', 8

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Vols; and Gurbachan Singh Talib's, 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib, 4 Vols. An interesting translation of Guru Granth Sahib has been completed by Nikky Gurinder Kaur Singh, under the title 'The Name of My Beloved'. Jarnail Singh of Toronto has published a French translation: Sri Gourou Granth Sahib in 4 Volumes. Now this scholar is translating the Text into German language. Guru Granth Sahib is also translated into Hindi by Dr. Manmohan Singh and by Shri Lakshm Chela Ram. Recently a person from Bathinda has translated text into Urdu. Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib is going to publish this translation. Here one thing should be kept in mind that these translations cannot substitute for the original Text because the translation of the sacred Texts is a very difficult task.

Guru Granth Sahib consists of the Bani of first five Gurus (Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas & Guru Arjan Dev) Ninth Guru (Guru Tegh Bahadur) and a large number of Hindu Bhakts (devotees), Muslim Sufis, (Jaidev, Sheikh Farid, Sain, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev, Sadhna, Beni, Trilochan, Sundar, Surdas and Parmananddas) and Bhatts. It contains 1430 pages and divided into 31 ragas. The order of the Bani of Guru Granth Sahib is as follow:

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33 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Order of Bani</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><em>Japji</em> – The Morning Prayer</td>
<td>1-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><em>Rahiras</em> – The evening prayer</td>
<td>8-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><em>Kirtan Sohila</em> – The bed time Prayer</td>
<td>12-14</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>The Ragas are in the following order:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Sri Raga</td>
<td>14-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Majh</td>
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<td>iii</td>
<td>Gauri</td>
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<td>iv</td>
<td>Asa</td>
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<td>v</td>
<td>Gujari</td>
<td>489-526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi</td>
<td>Devgandhari</td>
<td>527-536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>Bihagra</td>
<td>537-556</td>
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<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>Vadhans</td>
<td>557-594</td>
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<tr>
<td>ix</td>
<td>Sorath</td>
<td>595-659</td>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Dhansari</td>
<td>660-695</td>
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<tr>
<td>xi</td>
<td>Jaitsari</td>
<td>696-710</td>
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<td>xii</td>
<td>Todi</td>
<td>711-718</td>
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<td>xiii</td>
<td>Bairari</td>
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<td>xiv</td>
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<td>xv</td>
<td>Suhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>xvi</td>
<td>Bilwal</td>
<td>795-858</td>
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<td>xvii</td>
<td>Gaund</td>
<td>859-875</td>
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<tr>
<td>xviii</td>
<td>Ramkali</td>
<td>876-974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xix</td>
<td>Nat Narain</td>
<td>975-983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xx</td>
<td>Mali Gaura</td>
<td>984-988</td>
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</table>
Shlokas and Swayyas are given in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Shlokas and Swayyas are given in the following order:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><strong>Shlokas Sahaskrit</strong></td>
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<td>II</td>
<td><strong>Gatha</strong></td>
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<td>III</td>
<td><strong>Phunhay</strong></td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td><strong>Chaubolay</strong></td>
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<td>V</td>
<td><strong>Shlokas of Kabir</strong></td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td><strong>Shlokas of Farid</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td><strong>Swayyas of Guru Arjan</strong></td>
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<td>VIII</td>
<td><strong>Swayyas of Bhattts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td><strong>Shlokas of Gurus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td><strong>Shlokas of Ninth Guru</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td><strong>Mundavani</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Rag Mala</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Braj literature contains the literary works of Braj *Bhasha*. Braj *Bhasha* was the richest form of Hindi in the medieval age. The word
Braj goes back to *Rigvedic* Period. In *Rigveda*, the word 'Braj' is used in the sense of a 'pasture', 'hoard of cows', 'place for the cows to rest'.\(^{35}\) In a number of *Purans*, however, it has been used in the sense of a particular territory or region. But in *Mahabharta* it occurs with the same implication as in *Rigveda*.\(^{36}\) It was only after the Thirteenth century that the word Braj came to be applied to a particular region. Braj region spreads around the river *Yamuna*, at some places it crosses the river *Ganga* and extends from *Punjab* to the Western borders of *Bengal*.\(^{37}\) It was located in the vicinity of *Delhi* and *Agra* and included the places like *Itawa*, *Aligarh*, *Mathura* and *Brindaban* etc. The centre of Braj region was *Mathura*.\(^{38}\) In the modern set up, the Braj *Pradesh* include within its fold some parts of *Haryana*, some parts of *Rajasthan*, *Gwalior* area of *Madhya Pradesh*, whole of Western *Uttar Pradesh*, and the plains of *Kumayun* and *Garhwal*.\(^{39}\)

Braj *Bhasha* acquired a literary character during the 15\(^{th}\) and 16\(^{th}\) century when it received on the one hand, religious patronage through Vallabhacharyara and on the other hand, a place of honour in the courts of local chieftains as well as *Muslim Kings*.\(^{40}\) Braj *Bhasha* acquired prestige as the language of the devotional poetry centred on *Shri Krishna*.\(^{41}\) The main reason for the connection between Krishna-

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Bhakti and Braj Bhasha revolves around the assumption made by the Sixteenth-century devotees of Shri Krishna in North India that Shri Krishna, as a native of Braj, spoke Braj Bhasha. The Krishna-Bhakts naturally felt that the most appropriate language to praise Shri Krishna would be his own language i.e. Braj Bhasha.\textsuperscript{42}

During medieval Period, Vallabhacharya (1478-1530) was the first to appreciate the importance of Braj Bhasha. He patronised Braj culture, language, literature, music and painting.\textsuperscript{43} But the propagation of this language was brought about chiefly by Surdas and other Ashtachhap writers. In Braj literature Surdas, Parmananddas, Kumbhandas, Krishnadas, Nanddas, Chaturbhujdas, Govindswami and Chhitswami are known as Ashtachhap or the eight seals (stamps) because the poems they wrote are regarded as standard works of Braj Bhasha.\textsuperscript{44} Among them the first four were the followers of Acharya Vallabhacharya and the later four were the disciples of Goswami Vitthalnath, the son of Vallabhacharya,\textsuperscript{45} who grouped them under the name of ‘Ashtachhap in 1545 A.D.\textsuperscript{46} These writers were the faithful devotees of Lord Krishna. All of them were initiated into Pushtimarg by Vallabhacharya and his son Vitthalnath. Pushtimarg is founded by Vallabhacharya. It is the path in which the only support of the devotee is the grace or Pushti of Lord Krishna. Pushtimarg is based on

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., pp. 97-98.  
\textsuperscript{43} Encyclopedia of Indian Literature, Vol. I, pp. 578-79.  
\textsuperscript{44} F.E. Keay, A History of Hindi Literature, Award Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p. 72.  
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 30.  
\textsuperscript{46} Encyclopedia of Indian Literature, Vol. I, p. 579.
\end{flushleft}
Vallabacharya's doctrine of 'Suddhadvait'. According to this doctrine, 'Brahm' is the embodiment of 'Sat' (eternity), 'Chit' (consciousness), and 'Anand' (Bliss). *Pushtimarg* considers Sri Krishna the perfect incarnation of the divine being and its followers strive to merge them in God's 'Anandlila' through love and self-surrender.\(^{47}\) *Ashtachhap* writers have also explained *Pustimarg* in their writings. Nanddas in his work 'Bhasha Dasham Sakand' says that 'Pushti' is the grace of God on devotees without counting their shortcomings:

\[
\text{जद्दपि भगत भज्यो बहु दोषन। ताकी रच्चा कहिै 'पोषन'।}^{48}
\]

A Brief account of the *Ashtachhap* writers under study is in the following order.

1) **Surdas**

Surdas was born in the year 1478 A.D. at Sihi village, very near in the south of Delhi not far from the Braj region.\(^{49}\) It is mentioned in 'Chaurasi Vaishnavan Ki Varta' that the poet was born blind in the home of a Saraswata Brahman.\(^{50}\) The story of Surdas' life in the *Varta* starts from Gaughata when he first met Vallabhacharya. But to tell the story of his early life and education no authentic source is available and whatever material other than the *Varta* is extant can at best be taken as intelligent guess work.\(^{51}\) When Vallabhacharya halted

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\(^{48}\) Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 190.


at Gaughata he initiated Surdas into his *Sampradaya Pushtimarg*.\(^5^2\)

Soon after his initiation Vallabhacharya installed him as chief singer at *Shri Nathji* temple in *Govardhan*. He stayed in a nearby hamlet known as Parasoli and breathed his last probably in the year 1583.\(^5^3\)

It is indicated in the *Varta* that Akbar heard of the fame of Surdas and his musical composition and expressed a keen desire to meet him. When the meeting finally took place, the poet was required to compose a poem for Akbar. Surdas responded with a poem whose refrain declared that he had no room in his heart for anyone but Krishna.\(^5^4\) Then Akbar offered him a few villages and a handsome amount of money but the poet declined the offer and requested the Emperor not to try to meet him again.\(^5^5\)

Surdas is believed to have written three works: *Sursagar*, *Sursarawali* and *Sahitya Lahri*.\(^5^6\) In the present work only *Sursagar* is used which is considered the first work in Braj *Bhasha*.\(^5^7\) There is not any mention of any Braj *Bhasha* writer in the history of the *Hindi* literature before Surdas.\(^5^8\) The main trust of *Sursagar* is the depiction of the divine sports of *Shri Krishna* as given in the tenth chapter of the

\(^{5^2}\) Ibid., p. 11.


\(^{5^5}\) The *Varta* of Surdasa, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 122.


In this work *Nagari Parcharni Sabha*’s published edition of *Sursagar* is used. This edition is based on a number of manuscripts discovered by *Sabha*. It is not within the scope of the present work to offer a full justification for manuscripts.

2. **Parmananddas**

Parmananddas was born in 1493 A.D. in the family of a Kanaujiya Brahman living in the city of Kanauj. The day he was born, a prosperous merchant gave a large financial present to his father. This moved his father to say that his son had brought great joy to him, and therefore, he should be named Parmananddas, and thus this name was bestowed upon the child.

Parmananddas passed a very happy childhood in Kanauj. By the time he grew up, he had composed and sung a great number of *Padas*. People began to call him *Swami* and a number of them became his companions. At about this time Parmananddas' father suffered a great misfortune and lost all of his wealth. So he went towards South in search of a new fortune. Meanwhile Parmananddas continued to compose *Padas*. He settled in Prayag in 1519.

Parmananddas was initiated into *Sampradaya* in 1521 A.D. by Vallabhacharya who brought to him the significance of the tenth
chapter of the *Bhagvata Purana*. When Vallabhacharya set out for Braj, Parmananddas also accompanied him.\(^{64}\) He breathed his last in 1584 A.D.\(^{65}\) *Parmanandsagar* is his authentic work. *Govardhan Nath Shukla* has edited this work which is based on the manuscripts available from *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli, Nathdwara* and from *Shri Dwarakadas Parikh*.\(^{66}\)

3. **Kumbhandas**

He was born in 1468 A.D. at Jamunavati.\(^{67}\) He never felt attracted to the life of the family man although he was eventually married to girl. He was initiated by Vallabhacharya into the *Sampradaya* in 1500 A.D.\(^{68}\) Since Kumbhandas had a beautiful voice and could compose excellent *Kirtans*, Vallabhacharya assigned him the permanent duty of singing *Kirtans* before *Shri Govardhan Nathji*. All the *Kirtans* composed by Kumbhandas are on the subject of the divine love of *Krishna* and *Radha*.\(^{69}\)

Once, after hearing Kumbhandas' *Pada*, Akbar sent some of his men to bring him to royal palace. When Akbar's men told him that he was wanted at the imperial court, he was terribly unhappy but he had no choice except to obey. However, he refused to ride the royal carriage and walked all the way to Fatehpur Sikri. On reaching the
royal palace he was shown much respect but Kumbhandas was not pleased with this. He was very unhappy when Akbar expressed a desire to hear a *Pada* from him. He thought that his *Padas* were meant only for the Lord, and he could not commit the blasphemy of singing the same in the presence of a *mlechchha*. Hence, he composed a *Pada* and sang it before Akbar. This *Pada* says that a Bhakta has no business coming to Sikri. It has ruined his shoes and he forgot Hari's Name. He was made to pay homage to the one (Akbar) whose very face brings sorrow. Without Lord Krishna everything is only a sham:

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भक्तन की कहा सीकरी काम।
आवत जाल पन्हैयां टूटी बिसरि गयी हरि नाम।।
जाकौ मुख देखे दुख लागे, ताकौ करनी पड़ी प्रनाम।
‘कुम्भनदास’ ताल गिरधर बिनु, यह सब तूटो धाम।
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It is stated in the *Varta* that Raja Man Singh of Amer also met him.\(^\text{71}\) He breathed his last in 1583 A.D. Kumbhandas does not write any particular *Granth*. There is only mention of his *Padas* in Vallabh *Sampradaya*. These *Padas* are found in *Nathdwara* and *Kankroli*. *Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli*\(^\text{72}\) has published his *Padas*. Government of India's publication bureau at New Delhi has also published his *Padas* in 2008.\(^\text{73}\)

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\(^{71}\) *Varta of Kumbhandas*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhaacarya*, p. 179, also see Dr Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas*, p. 3.

\(^{72}\) Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli is in Rajasthan. This institute has taken great initiative to discover and publish the manuscripts of Ashtachhap writers. For this purpose it has founded an 'Ashtachhap Samiti'.

\(^{73}\) Parkashan Vibhag Govt. of India has also decided to publish the works of Ashtachhap writers by recognizing their importance. From 2001 to 2009 it has published works of all Ashtachhap writers.
4. **Krishandas**

He was born in the village of Chilotra\textsuperscript{74} in Gujarat in 1496 A.D. Krishandas' father governed the village as its headman. On his birth the Brahmans predicted that the birth signs of the new born child showed clearly that the child would be a *Bhakta of Shri Krishna* and said that the child should be named Krishandas, and hence this name was bestowed upon the child.\textsuperscript{75} When he was around twelve years old, a grain merchant came to Chilotra and set up a shop on the outskirts of the village. Krishandas' father allied himself with a thief who intended to rob the merchant. The thief robbed the merchant one night. Krishandas knew about this deal and advised the merchant to take a formal complaint before the King. He promised him that he himself would testify on his behalf. The King was greatly impressed when he heard about the boy who had the courage to expose the crime committed by his own father, and decided that he would ask the boy to stay at his court. He told Krishandas that he was impressed by his honesty, and that he wanted him to stay at his court so that he might benefit from his presence in the times to come. To this request, Krishandas replied humbly that honesty always displeased everyone, as it had displeased his father; hence he had decided to become a homeless ascetic. The King continued to try to persuade Krishandas to remain at his court, but he did not accept his offer and after obtaining his father's permission, he left Chilotra and set out to travel to Braj.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74} *Varta of Krishandass*, tr., Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{75} *Ibid*.
\textsuperscript{76} *Ibid.*, pp.208-211.
He received his initiation from Vallabhacharya in 1512 A.D.\textsuperscript{77} Vitthalnath, son of Vallabhacharya, assigned Krishnadas the office of the \textit{Adhikari} and made him responsible for the management of the temple.\textsuperscript{78} Krishnadas composed beautiful \textit{Kirtans} describing the Krishna \textit{Lilas}. He died in 1579 A.D.\textsuperscript{79} while examining a well which was being constructed at the request of \textit{Vaishnavas}. He has written only \textit{Padas} which are published by \textit{Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli} in 1962 and by Government of India’s publication bureau at New Delhi in 2001.

5. \textbf{Nanddas}

He was born in a Brahman family in 1533 A.D. at Rampur village situated in the east of Mathura.\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Dosau Bawan Vaishnavan Ki Varta} states that he was the cousin brother of Tulsidas.\textsuperscript{81} It is said that his failure in worldly love turned him towards Krishna \textit{Bhakti}. He was initiated by Vitthalnath into \textit{Sampradaya}.\textsuperscript{82}

After his initiation into \textit{Sampradaya} he stayed at Govardhan in the company of Surdas. He spent the rest of his life in writing several works in the praise of Lord and participating in the \textit{Kirtans} of Shri Nathji. He breathed his last in 1583 A.D.\textsuperscript{83}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 212.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Bindu Mattoo, \textit{New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of 16th Century India)}, p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{79} \textit{Varta of Krishnadas}, tr. Richard Barz, \textit{The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya}, p. 221.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Sarla Choudhary, \textit{Ashtachhap Kavi Nanddas}, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2006, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Krishandev Jhari, \textit{Ashtachhap Aur Nanddas}, Sharda Parkashan, Delhi, 1976, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{82} \textit{Encyclopedia of Indian Literature}, Vol. VI, 1994, p. 2874.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Bindu Mattoo, \textit{New Horizons (A Socio-Economic Study of the 16th Century India)}, p. 25.
\end{itemize}
Fourteen works of Nanddas are Ras Panchadhyay, Siddanth Panchadhyya, Man Manjri, Anekarth Manjri, Roopmanjri, Rasmanjri, Virahmanjri, Bhramargit, Govardhan Lila, Shyam Sagai, Rukmini Mangal, Sudhamma Charit, Bhasha Dasham Sakand and Padavali. All these works are edited by Nagari Parcharni Sabha under the title of Nanddas Granthawali.

6. Chaturbhujdas

He was born in the year 1530 A.D. at Jamunavati village in Braj territory. He was the youngest son of Kumbhandas. He was initiated by Goswami Vitthalnath into Sampradaya. He led the life of a normal family man, though he was never involved much in it. After the death of his wife, he got married to a widow on the request of Goswami Vitthalnath.

Single minded devotion to Shri Nathji was the distinguishing feature of his life. He spent his entire life at his birth place Jamunavati and daily visited the temple of Shri Nathji. In 1585 A.D., when Vitthalnath breathed his last, Chaturbhujdas was in his village. On hearing this news, he went to Govardhan with a heavy heart, and after having the Darshana of Shri Nathji, he, too, left for his heavenly abode. Chaturbhujdas did not write any particular ‘Granth’ but only

88 Ibid.
compiled miscellaneous *Padas* which are edited by *Vidhaya Vibhag Kankroli* and Government of India's publication bureau at New Delhi.

7. **Govindswami**

He was born in 1505 A.D. at Antari village located in the present Bhartpur.\(^8^9\) He was a Brahman. No account of his family and parentage is available, but it is certain that he was married, and also, that he had a daughter by that marriage. It appears that he got fed up of his family life and the world around him and renounced the worldly pleasures to seek spiritual enlightenment. He left his home for Braj, and settled there in the *Mahaban* village. He was a master musician and a lover of classical Music.\(^9^0\)

In 1535 A.D. he came to Gokul and became a disciple of Vitthalnath.\(^9^1\) After his initiation, he went to *Govardhan*, and settled there permanently. It is reputed that Tansen, the famous singer of Akbar's Court, was highly impressed by him and frequently visited him.\(^9^2\)

It is mentioned in *Ashtachhap Ki Varta* that one morning Govindswami was setting on the *Yashodha Ghat* of *Gokul* and was practising the *Bhairav Raga*. The passersby were so enthralled by the *Raga* that they stood there and listened to the Divine music in wrapt

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\(^8^9\) Dr. Hargulal, *Ashtachhap Kavi Govindswami*, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2002, p. 2.


attention. Akbar, too, happened to be there in the guise of an ordinary Muslim. He was so impressed by the music that he could not check himself, and happened to say Wah! Wah! Govindswami looked at him and was terribly unhappy. With sorrow in his eyes he commented that his Raga had lost its sacredness as a mlechchha had heard it, and therefore it was no longer fit to be presented to his Lord. He never used Bhairav Raga for Shri Nathji’s Kirtan again. 93 He died in 1585 A.D. 94 He compiled only Padas on various subjects which are edited by Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli and by publication bureau of Indian Government.

8. **Chhitswami**

He was born in Mathura in 1515 A.D. 95 His profession was a Purohit of various families. He was also acted as the Purohit of the famous Birbal of Akbar’s Court. 96 He was initiated into Sampradaya by Vitthalnath. 97 An incident in Chhitswami’s life shows that he was a great follower of Goswami Vitthalnath. On account of his being the family Purohit of Birbal, he received from him an annuity which was used to look after his family. Once when he had gone to Birbal’s house to receive this grant, Birbal happened to pass some unpleasant remark about Goswami. This made Chhitswami very angry and he

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
97 Ibid., p. 3.
walked away in a huff, telling him that he did not want that annuity ever. When Goswami heard about this incident, he asked Chhitswami to go to Lahore to one of his followers to receive some financial help. Chhitswami flatly refused this offer by saying that he had not become a Vaishnava in order to receive alms. Finally Goswami sent a messenger to Lahore and an annual grant was arranged for Chhitswami's family.98

After his initiation, he settled permanently in Poonchhri near Govardhan. He spent his time in meditation and Kirtan of Shri Nath Ji. He breathed his last in 1585 A.D.99 He compiled only Padas which are edited by Vidhya Vibhag Kankroli and by publication bureau of Indian Government.100

The high point of literature in Braj Bhasha inspired by Krishna-Bhakti was written by these Ashtachhap writers. Among them Surdas’ writings are most important. He was perhaps the first writer of Braj Bhasha. Parmananddas’ and Nanddas’ writings are placed after him. In remaining other five, Kumbhandas’, Krishandas’ and Chaturbhujdas’ writings are of middle category. Govindswami and Chhitswami's writings are placed in the end according to ranking.101

Due to their effect Braj Bhasha had become the leading literary

99 Ibid., p. 4.
100 Basant Yamdgam, Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Chhitswami, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 2003.
language of North India during Sixteenth and Seventeenth century. After Ashtachhap writers this language had lost its prestige. During the second half of the Nineteenth century, Khadiboli Hindi, modern standard Hindi, began to supplant this language.102

**Interaction between Two Ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature)**

Ashtachhap writers had made Braj Bhasha so effective during Sixteenth and Seventeenth century that even the writers of other languages had also used it. This language is used in Guru Granth Sahib. Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, has used this language in *Sukhmani Sahib*,103 *Phunhay*,104 and *Chaubolay*.105 Sholkas of Guru Tegh Bahadur are also written in Braj Bhasha.106 *Ragamala*, at the end of Guru Granth Sahib, is also in this language.107 Some of the bards whose Swayyas are in Guru Granth Sahib belong to Braj Mandal.108 On the other side Ashtachhap writers had also used Punjabi language in their works.109

The organisation of sacred literature in Ragas was a part of the medieval Indian religious milieu. It seems to have been well entrenched by the late Sixteenth century.110 The writers of Guru

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104 Ibid., p. 172.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., p. 185.
107 Ibid., p. 186.
108 Ibid., p. 177.
110 Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, p. 89.
Granth Sahib and Braj literature have composed their couplets (Padas) in Ragas. Todi, Sarang, Kanara, Gauri, Gujari, Bilwal, Kedera, Malar, Dhanasari, Basant, Nat, Bihagra, Sorath, Jaitsari, Suhi, Ramkali, Maru, Bhairo, Jaijavant or Devgandhari are the some common Ragas\textsuperscript{111} which are used in both ideologies (Guru Granth Sahib and Braj Literature). In this connection the observations of Gurinder Singh Mann are worth mentioning, after physically examining the Kartarpur Pothi, he concludes that this Pothi is clearly structured in two distinct parts. The opening section begins with Raga Sri and ends with Raga Tilang; the second begins with Raga Suhi and ends with Raga Prabhati. This division has great significance. The Kartarpur Pothi begins with Raga Sri, a favourite Raga of the Vaishnavas, and its first section ends with Raga Tilang, a favourite Raga of the Sufis. Then in the second section of the Text this sequence is exactly reversed. It commences with Raga Suhi, a favourite among Sufis and ends with Raga Prabahti, which was especially associated with Vaishnavas. The placement of these Ragas in key points in the Sikh Text seems to indicate Guru Arjan’s engagement with the two major religious groups i.e. Vaishnavas and Sufis.\textsuperscript{112}

Gurinder Singh Mann refers to the end of the Kartarpur Pothi’s table of contents, which divides up the thirty Raga sections in order of appearance in the Text as follows:

\textsuperscript{111} Dr. Hargulal, Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Krishandas, Parkashan Vibhag, Govt. of India, 2001, p. 52, also see Dr. Hargulal, Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Surdas, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{112} Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of Sikh Scripture, p. 93.
• Sri, Majh, Gauri
• Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari
• Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath
• Dhansari, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang
• Suhi, Bilwal, Gond, Ramkali
• Nat Narain, Mali Gaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara
• Bhairo, Basant, Sarang, Malar, Kanara
• Kalyan, Prabhati

The only possibly could be that this division may have been related to the eight Pahirs that make up the day, with each set of Ragas intended for one Pahir. This same principle forms the basis for the eight Artis (prayers) performed throughout the day in Vaishnava temples. Ashtachhap writers have mentioned about the eight daily sevas connected with the Lord Krishna. These are Mangla: The image is washed, dressed and is taken off the couch, where it is supposed to have slept during the night and this is done about half an hour after sunrise; Sringar: the image having been anointed and perfumed with oil, camphor and sandal and this is done about an hour and a half after the preceding ceremony; Gwala: the image is now visited, preparatory to his going out to attend the cattle along

113 Ibid.
115 There is great difference between Seva of Vallabhacharya’s Sampradaya and the ordinary worship called Puja. According to Vallabhacharya that Seva is unselfish love for and service of the Divine being, while Puja is worship done for the doer’s benefit. Richard Barz, The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya, p. 51.
with cowherd and this ceremony is held about forty eight minutes after the Sringar; **Rajbhog:** held at mid way when Lord Krishna is supposed to come in from the pastures; **Uthapan** the calling up; the summoning of the God from his Siesta and this takes place between two or three hours before sunset; **Bhog:** the afternoon meal and it takes place about half an hour after preceding ceremony; **Sandhya:** refers to the evening sringar of the image and last is **Shayan:** the image about eight or nine in the evening is placed upon the bed for sleep and food is left near to bed incase he should become hungry during the night. All these activities are performed because the followers of **Pustimarg** considered tha the **Svarupa** of Lord Krishna is alive and real so it must be made comfortable. They do not call the **Svarupa as Murits.**

Thus, it must be argued that inspite of the fact that Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature belong to the two different schools of **Bhakti**, there are some similarities between them. These similarities are responsible for the citation of couplets of Surdas and Parmananddas in Guru Granth Sahib as in Sikh Scripture only those compositions are included whose perspective resembled with its thought. Surdas' single verse appears in **Raga Sarang.** This verse is:

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117 Ibid., p. 48

One can find the single verse even in Surdas’s works Sursagar:

	तजी मन, हरि-बिगुलनि को संग।

Giani Narain Singh, the commentator of Guru Granth Sahib, mentioned that this single verse is followed by a blank space, which is in turn followed by a hymn under the heading Sarang Mahala 5 Surdas. The hymn closes with the signature of Surdas in its last line. Taken in context, the appearance of Guru Arjan’s name alongside that of Surdas indicates that this hymn is composed by Guru Arjan and is in direct response to Surdas’ verse that precedes it. The hymn of Guru Arjan is:

मारण भवत ॥

पति सरसुध भूमधि।

उठ भर भलध सरध सह भवध भलध सम ॥

चनत्रू प्रेम चढ़े चिन्धिशिष्टी धर्म ये महाले केवल।

भर यममु लिचे लघु हे वद्रोहे मंचव वधर माहद।

मिठाश मंचव उष्ण भर न सचुव लिचे बुमटी उठे मेघ।

मुकःरण भल ूँध रण धीरे धीरें किंतु धर्मेल्लें।

Parmananddas’ couplet is also in Raga Sarang and included in Guru Granth Sahib. This Couplet is a follows:-

121 Dr. Dharmpal Singal, ed., Bhagtan Di Bani, National Book Trust India, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 277-278, also see Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of Sikh Scripture, p.116.
122 Guru Granth Sahib, Sarang Mahala 5, 1253.
This couplet is also recorded in Parmananddas’ work Parmanandsagar:

This couplet is also recorded in Parmananddas’ work Parmanandsagar:

To find both couplets in Sursagar and Parmanandsagar authenticates that the Surdas and Parmanandas whose couplets are cited in Guru Granth Sahib are the reputed writers of Braj Bhasha.

Use of Braj Bhasha in Guru Granth Sahib and Punjabi by Braj writers, use of similar Ragas by both ideologies and citation of

123 Ibid.
124 Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 909, p. 320.
couplets of Surdas and Parmananddas in Guru Granth Sahib have proved that beyond theological differences there is interaction between these ideologies. Hawley, an eminent authority on the Bhakti movement, draws our attention to an alignment between Namdev (a Nirguna Saint) and Surdas (a prominent Saguna Vaishnava).\footnote{John Stratton Hawley, "The Nirgun/Sagun Distinction in early Anthologies of Hindi Devotion," ed., David N. Lorenzen, Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action, Delhi, 1996, p.165.} David N. Lorenzen belives that the Nirguna Saints and the Saguna Vaishnava devotees shared common historical roots.\footnote{David N. Lorenzen, "Introduction :The Historical Vicissitudes of Bhakti Religion," in Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action, Delhi, 1996,p 21.} In this connection Deen Dayalu Gupta rightly announced that from these similarities it may be argued that Ashtachhap writers not only knew about the Saint writers of their period but to some extent were also influenced by them.\footnote{Deen Dayalu Gupta, Ashtachhap Aur Vallabh Sampradaya, Vol. I, p. 18.} On the other side, in Guru Granth Sahib occasionally, Guru Nanak makes use of the Krishan-Gopi lore for expressing his own ideas:\footnote{J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak", ed., Kiran Pawar, Women in Indian History : Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives, p. 155.}

For more understanding of their connection, there is a need to explore their thought content:

**God:** In Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature both states, Nirguna and Saguna of the Ultimate Reality have been recognised :

कः प्रभु निर्गुण कः सागुण अनुभवे \footnote{Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 465.}

बल्कि प्रभु सागुण ज्ञानी भस्मी \footnote{Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 287.}
Guru Arjan Dev makes this very clear by saying that the Lord is formless and also formed; the One Lord is without attributes, yet with attributes:

निर्गुण भवन अभिधि निर्गुण मवगुण टेव ||

or

मवगुण निर्गुण निर्गुण मूर्त मायपी आधि ||

Braj writers also accept that the Ultimate Reality is both, Nirguna and Saguna:

जाकी माया ललै न कोई। निर्गुण-समु धर बपु सोई।

or

तुम बिन कौन दीन खल तारै, निर्गुण समु धर रहि आए।

Nanddas in his work Bhasha Dasham Sakand accepts these two states of Ultimate Reality:

ऐसै अस्तुति बहुं विधि कीन। निर्गुण समु धर रंग भीन।

The Concept of Nirguna Brahma is so elusive and abstract that our mind cannot comprehend it. Thus imagery is used in Guru Granth Sahib for comprehending the Ultimate Reality. Where imagery is used to realize the Ultimate Reality, the Nirguna becomes Saguna:

अहिताँ निर्गुणिं बिकामति उंचने तिङु त्वे मवगुण शीम।

Surdas in his work Sursagar mentioned that God has become Saguna by transcending His Nirguna state for the sake of His Bhakts:
Although imagery is used in Guru Granth Sahib for comprehending the Ultimate Reality yet one finds it resorting from image to image without admitting being able to capture either God's intensity or Its infinity. The *Nirguna* still remains *Nirguna* despite having many qualities. God has thousand eyes, forms, feet and fragrances, yet without eyes, forms, feet and fragrances It is:

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Thus it becomes clear that the *Saguna* of Guru Granth Sahib is not to be taken as anthropomorphic or as resembling the concept of *Avtar*, in which the transcendent Lord comes down upon earth in the form of human being. The *Nirguna* perception of *Krishna*, *Rama* and *Hari* is that of a non-incarnate, formless, absolute Supreme Being. Guru Nank states that the Master who created air, water and fire also created *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. He alone is the giver of gifts; all others are beggar. There are 33 crores of gods who beg from the master whose stores suffer no diminution:

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On the other hand Braj writers believed that the Lord lives in heaven, he has come to the world in human form, as Avtar, to end the miseries of the people:

‘परमानन्द’ प्रभु बैकुण्ठ जाके, ब्रज लीनो अवतार।।

or

धन्य कृष्ण अवतार ब्रह्म लियी।।

or

वेद-उपनिषद जासूं कैं, निरगुणि हि बलावै।
सोइ समुन है नंद की दाँवरी बंधैवै।।

Krishandadas states that Lord has come in the form of Avtar to end the miseries of Jiwa:

जीव उद्दार्न कारन कल्ति में पुरुषोत्तम लीला-अवतार।।

Nanddas also agrees with this view:

तब श्री कृष्ण अवतरि हि आई। सिद्ध करें भगतन के भाई।।

Kumbhandas has explained the Ancient theory that Brahma has created the world, Vishnu is the sustainer and Mahesh is the destroyer of the world and established the unity of three of them with Lord Krishna:

ब्रह्मा रूप उतपति करौं, रूढ़ रूप संहार।
विष्णु रूप रच्छा करौं, सो मैं हैं नंदकुमार।।

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140 Guru Granth Sahib, Gujari Mahala 1, p. 504.
141 Parmanandas, Parmanandsgar, Pad 27, p. 10
143 Ibid., Pad 1/4, p. 1.
144 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 1012, p. 414.
145 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 191.
146 Dr. Hargulal, Ashtachhap Ke Kavi Kumbhandas, p. 17.
In Japji there is also mention of *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. Here they are shown born from One Divine Mother:

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Japji

Here they are shown born from One Divine Mother:

Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh:-

Further it is stated that Lord is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world. Earlier there was only One Lord, there was no *Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh*:-

Even there was no *Gopi*, no *Krishna*, no cows and cowherds:-

Further it is stated that God created and destroyed the world Itself. Even God link each and every person to their tasks:-

Guru Granth Sahib believes that God created the *Avtars* by Its will. God is above the *Avtars* like *Rama* or *Krishna*. The creator of the Universe does not become great by killing *Ravan*. He who is all pervasive, who created all living beings, and who runs Universe does not become great by subduing the serpent *Kali*, or by killing *Kansa*. The One who is manifest everywhere can not be concealed: -

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147 *Guru Granth Sahib, Japji*, p. 7.
Ashtachhap writers considered Lord Krishna as the Avtar of Parbrahman. They were the worshippers of Ananda Lila (Rasa) of Shri Krishna. Surdas' Gopis are saying to Udho that they were the worshippers of Anand-Lila of Lord Krishna. They do not want Mukti without him. Parmananddas apart from Lord Krishna also considered Nanda, Yashoda, Gopi, Goual and Gokal as the embodiments of Ananda-Svarupa and the Sur, Mun and Sant who worshipped them always remained in the state of Ananda. Nanddas called Shri Krishna as Rasak and Raskaran and considered Lord the base of the whole Rasa in the world. Krishandhas with Lord Krishna also counted Radhika as the embodiment of Rasa and called her Raskani. Kumbhandas also called Lord Krishna Rasak and Govindswami and Chhitswami is the worshippers of the Rasak Jodi (couple) of Radha and Krishna. Chaturbujdas had made it clear that the Lord Krishna beomes happy only with Rasa and Radha has

151 Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 350.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid., p. 564.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid., 565.
achived him through this *Rasa*. *Ashtachhap* writers have given great importance to *Rasa* (*Ananda*) in their works because Vallabhacharya (the spiritual guide of the *Ashtachhap* writers) considered that *Brahma* (God) consist of 'Sat', 'Chhit' and 'Ananda'. *Sat* is simple existence, being neither conscious nor able to feel. *Chhit* is awareness, understanding and consciousness. By *Ananda*, a word which refers to feelings of happiness, of delight, of joy, is meant the ability to take pleasure. This quality is most important, according to Vallabhacharya, 'without *Ananda* the Divine play that is called *Lila* would be impossible'.

Thus, ultimately Braj writers emphasize on the worship of *Saguna Brahma*:

निर्गुण कही कहा कहियत है, तुम निर्गुण अति भारी।
सेवत सुलभ स्याम सुंदर कौं, मुक्ति लही हम चारी।

or

निर्गुण भए अतीत के सगुन सकल जग माहिं।

On the other side, Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes on the worship of *Nirguna* God:

लालु देखा निहीनवालू है लालु लहि तहि तहि तहि तहि॥

हूँ मरन मल्लभांड सिंहवाल॥

Guru Granth Sahib states that God has no form, no feature, no colour. It is independent of these three qualities:

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161 Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 465.
The *Bhramargit* poems of Surdas and Nanddas clearly negate the *Nirguna* philosophy by saying that it is not possible to worship the God, who has no form and feature:

\[
\text{रूप न रेख बरन बघु, संग न लल सहाई।}
\text{ला निरगुन सें नेह निरंतर, क्यों निरहै री माई।} \tag{164}
\]

Naddas in his *Bhramargit* emphasized that the Lord has all qualities i.e. form, feature:

\[
\text{जो उनके गुण नाहिं और गुण भये कहाँ ते।}
\text{बीज बिना तरफ जमें मोहिं तुम कहे कहाँ ते।} \tag{165}
\]

**Jiva (creature):** Guru Granth Sahib holds the view that *Jiva* is the creation of the God:

\[
\text{गुरूभी उदरति भ्राम्भ।} \tag{166}
\]

By the order of the True Lord the *Jiva* comes into existence:

\[
\text{गुरूभी उदरति सीम गुरूभी भिले द्विभागी।} \tag{167}
\]

*Ashtachhap* writers believed that *Jivas* are not created but are manifested by *Brahma* out of himself. In *Jiva* God's 'Sat' and 'Chhit' *guna* remained. So, *Jivas* are part or fragments of *Brahma*. They are to *Brahma* as sparks are to fire:

---

Similarly Guru Granth Sahib accepts that God creates Jivas out of Itself. The human soul is a sort of miniature of God. As it comes out of God it carries the qualities of God:

दिवमू ते गैरिक भावं तत्त्व देवमू भावे ममात्मे सीखि॥

or

ते खुरमें होरी पंढे से खेंचे मे खखे॥

So, both ideologies believe that the Lord and the jivas are non-different:

जीव ब्रह्म अंतर नहीं मनि कंचन जैसे॥

or

तुमहिं जीवन तुमहीं जीय। तुमहीं सब कोउ अवर न पीय॥

Vallabhacharya divided Jivas into three categories. These are Pushti Jiva, Maryada Jiva and Pravaha Jiva. Pushti Jivas are well-nourished, complete and have the Anugraha (grace) of Shri Krishna. Maryada Jivas are within the limits of the actions and live in expectations of the rewards that the Veda promises in heaven. Pravaha Jivas are those who crave riches and sensual pleasures on earth. These Jivas are demonic and have little potential for Uddhaar.

168 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 197.
170 Guru Granth Sahib, Majh Mahala 3, p. 131.
171 Ibid., Dhansari, Bhagat Pipa Ji, p. 695.
172 Parmananddas, Parmananddsagar, Pad 894, p. 315.
173 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 220.
there are two kinds of demonic Jivas: those that are knowingly evil and those that are unknowingly evil. According to Vallabhacharya’s thought Pushti Jivas are the best Jivas. He said that Pushti Jivas are manifested from the body (Kaya) of Shri Krishna, while the Maryada Jivas are manifested by the speech of Shri Krishna, and the Pravaha Jivas are produced from the mind of Shri Krishna. There is a great deal of significance in the origin of the Pushti Jivas as they originated from the body of Shri Krishna which is made of the Ananda portion of his being. Vallabhacharya considered that all Bhakts (devotees) are Pushti Jivas and that the Bhaktimarga is the Pushtimarg. The followers of Pushtimarg are satisfied only with direct experience of the Divine body of Shri Krishna. Vallabhacharya is of the view that Gopi (female) is the Guru of the Pushtimarg who enjoyed physical love-play with Lord Krishna during his life in Braj on earth and who enjoy eternally the love of Shri Krishna in the endless Lila in Goloka.

Ashtachhap writers in their works do not have divided Jivas in these three categories. Even Surdas, who deals in detail about the creation of Jivas, does not have mentioned these categories of Jivas. Parmananddas and Nanddas have mentioned about the creation of the Jivas. Krishandas, Kumbhandas and Govindswami do not have mentioned about the creation of Jivas. Chaturbujdas and

175 Ibid., p. 72.
176 Ibid., p. 73.
178 Ibid., p. 434.
Chhitswami have not mentioned particularly about *Jivas* but while explaining their views about God both of them accepted that Lord Krishna and *Jivas* are non-different.\(^{179}\)

As far as Guru Granth Sahib is considered no such division of *Jivas* can be seen in it. Guru Granth Sahib only considered that creatures are of two types i.e. *Gurmukh* and *Manmukh*. *Gurmukh* is that *Jiva* who attain the company of the Lord:-

\[ \text{सीमातु ओभा भें शानमृध बुद्धभे उति पाविः} \] \(^{180}\)

*Manmukh* is an ego-centered person who craves only for the riches of the world:-

\[ \text{अत्मबिध धीगानु ठ नाटकी सामिथि सतभु मश्व उति विः} \] \(^{181}\)

*Gurmukh* may be compared with *Pushti Jiva* of Vallabhacharya’s thought and *Manmukh* with that of *Pravaha Jiva*. Furthermore as Vallabhacharya considered *Gopi* as the prime preceptor of *Pushtimarg*, same in Guru Granth Sahib *Suhagan* is guide on spiritual path.\(^{182}\)

**World** : Both ideologies believe that God is the creator of the world. Guru Granth Sahib states that whenever God wishes It creates the world and expand it, whenever It wishes, It again becomes one :

\[ \text{हिम हरे उर वें विमसन्गु} \]

\[ \text{हिम हरे उर टेन्वरन्गु} \] \(^{183}\)

\(^{179}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{180}\) *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 4, p. 78.  
\(^{182}\) *Ibid.*, Dhansari Mahala 1, p.689.  
Same view is expressed by Surdas and Nanddas:

कोटि ब्रह्माण्ड छनही मैं नासै, छनही मैं उपजावै।

or

तुम परमेश्वर सब के नाथ। बिस्व समस्त तिहारे हाथ।।
छिनक मैं करो, भरो, संहरो।। उर्मिनाभि लौं फिरि बिस्तरी।।

It is only the God who has created the world:

तेहै देवगुरु मिति सब दीना।

or

दीना भमसहूं तेहै देवसहूं।

Only God has the power for the creation of world:

तिन कीन्ही सब जग बिस्तार। जाको नाही पारावार।।

or

आदि अंत कोऊ नहि जानत, हरता करता सब संसार।।

Ashtachhap writers differentiated Jagat and Sansar. They believed that jagat is the creation of the God and it consists of God’s 'Sat' guna. As it is created from the God it again mingled in God. To explain this view Surdas takes the example of the bubble in the water. He mentioned that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the world created from the God and it again mingled in God:

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185 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 197.
186 Guru Granth Sahib, Basant Mahala 1 Ashtapadai, p. 1188.
187 Ibid., Japli, p. 3
Similar view is expressed by Guru Tegh Bahadur. He also takes the example of the bubble in the water to expalain the creation of world from God. He states that as the bubble in the water well up and disappears again, so is the Universe created; says Nanak, listen, O my friend:-

कैसे नल के गुच्छुल्ल घुमाने घिरते हैं॥

जग करता दूर ची व्युत्तत वृज हो ॥ १९१

_Sansar_ is created by the ignorance of the _Jiva_. It is created by the _Avidya Shakti_ of _Maya_, so it is false. _Ashtachhap_ writers compared it with poison:

विष सागर संसार विषम संग ते माहि उढ़रिये ॥ १९२

or

सरनागित आयी दोष मिटायी सब तज यह संसार हो ॥ १९३

Above cited couplets negate the theory that the world is created out of _Prakriti_ and _Purusha_ but according to them, God is the only eternal entity who has created _Purusha_ and _Prakriti_:

मिट्ट मन्दिर भग्नि थुपंथि वै जिवर भृये धुमर रुकते ॥ १९४
Braj writers have also accepted the power of God over the power of Prakriti and Purusha.195

**Maya**: The word Maya is used in Indian philosophy from Ancient times. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha in his *Mahan Kosh* (encyclopedia) according to Gurbani states, "Maya is the Shakti (Power) of God which is responsible for the creation of the world."196 Guru Granth Sahib holds that Maya is not a separate ultimate reality. It has been created by God. Human beings are serving the maid (Maya) and do not see the Lord:—

«चेदी बी मेहा बरविं ढ़ुंढ़ु रुपी चीमी॥» 197

Ashtachhap writers called it Vidya Maya. It is that Shakti or power of Brahma which creates and destroys this world with the Iccha of Brahma.198 Among Ashtachhap writers Nanddas is the only one who has dealt with Vidya Maya in detail.199 This Maya is under the control of Brahma:

माया मोहन लाल की, जिन मोहे सब संत।।200

or

प्रभु तुं माया अगम अगोचर, लहिं न सकत कोउ पार।।201

Guru Granth Sahib also believes that this Shakti (Maya) is responsible for the creation of the world. God fashioned the world by creating human Maya in various colours and kinds:-

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199 *Ibid*.
Guru Granth Sahib accepts that the illusion of *Maya* takes an individual away from God:

*जैसी जैसी झड़ी बर्बर बर्बर मिलमी भाविष्य मिलि छिपाही॥*  

*Ashtachhap* writers called this *Avidya Maya*. Surdas is the one among the *Ashtachhap* writers who mentioned the *Avidya Maya* in detail. It brings out the misery of the *Jiva*. Because of its influence, the individual forgets self nature as a part of *Brahma* and lives in a painful world of sufferings without uttering the name of *Brahma*:

*कठिन जो गाँठि परी माया की, तोरी जाति न भटकै। ना हरि-भक्ति, न साधु-समागम, रहौ बीचही लटकै॥*  

This Maya leads an individual towards transmigration.

*भाविष्य राम माया मेंि बा डिय उस घटमत घटइ॥*  

Its influence on the individual can be vanished only with the help of God:

*इहि माया सब लोगनि लूटयी। जिहि हरि कृपा करिसो छूटयी॥*  

So *Ashtachhap* writers have divided Maya into two distinct categories i.e. *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya*. *Vidya Maya* is responsible for the creation of the world and it is true. *Avidya Maya* is that *Shakti* (Power) which is responsible for the creation of ignorance.

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203 Ibid., Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 921.
206 Guru Granth Sahib, Dhansari Namdev, p. 693.
among individuals about the Lord and this *Maya* is false. Because of its influence individuals are immersed in *Kama, Karodha, Lobha, Moha* and *Ahankara*. Although Guru Granth Sahib does not divided *Maya* into these two parts directly yet through the hymns like *Nanak Sachay Kee Saachee Kar*\(^{208}\) and through *Ha-umai Maa-i-aa Mohnee Doojai lagai Jaa-ay*\(^{209}\) one can find references about *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya*.\(^{210}\)

**Yoga:** Guru Granth Sahib have used metaphors from the ideas and practices of the *Yogis* with its own orientation.\(^{211}\) Guru Nanak tells the *Yogis* in detail what *Yog* is not and what it should be.\(^{212}\) *Yog* does not consist in donning the cloak, holding the staff, or smearing the body with ashes:-

\[
	ext{ੰੰੜੜ} \text{ ਦੀ ਫਿਰੱਦੜ ਨੰੜੜ} \text{ ਤੇ ਕੰਢੜ} \text{ ਨੰੜੜ} \text{ ਧੰਦ੍ਰ ਚੰਦ੍ਰੀਜੀਅਰੇ॥} 213
\]

It does not consist in wearing the earrings, shaving the head, or blowing the horn (*Singi*):-

\[
	ext{ੰੰੜੜ} \text{ ਤੁੰਨੀ ਮੁੱਢੀ ਮੁੱਢੀਆਂ ਨੰੜੜ} \text{ ਤੇ ਮੰਗੀ ਸ਼ੰਟੀਆਂ॥} 214
\]

The real *Yog* is to live 'detached-in-attachment':-

\[
	ext{ਅੰਤਰ ਭਾਵ ਨਿਵਾਸਤਾ ਦੀ ਜੀਅਰੇ ਨੰੜੜ ਤੂਘਾਂਡ ਹੀ ਧਾਜੀਆਂ॥} 215
\]

\(^{208}\) *Guru Granth Sahib*, Japji, p. 7.

\(^{209}\) Ibid., Bilwal Mahal 3, p. 853.


\(^{213}\) *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahal 1, p. 730.

\(^{214}\) Ibid.

\(^{215}\) Ibid.
Yog does not consist in mere talk; only he can be called a real Yogi who regards all human beings as equal:


dåli nêqyô ḍa ḍêsthi


\[216\]

Yog does not consist in living outside (habitations) in Marhis and Masans; it does not consist in deep meditation. Yog does not consist in wandering in different countries in all the ten directions; it does not consist in bathing at sacred places. Yog is attained by remaining 'detached-in-attachment':-


dêgô ḍa ḍêkâvi ḍêkî bhâmâkî nêqyô ḍa ḍêkî krâhtiyâmè
dêgô ḍa ḍêkî ḍêkâvi ḍêkâvi nêqyô ḍa ḍêkî krâhtiyâmè
bhânâ bhânâ bhânâ bhânâ krâhtiyâmè nêqyô nêqyô hrâhtiyâmè

\[217\]

Similarly in Ashtachhap writings Gopis are giving a very different interpretation of Yog to Udho.\[218\] They are saying to Udho that the Yoga which he is teaching to them they are the followers of that:


\[219\]

Their hairs have grown as ‘Sali’ (sacred thread) and they are badly burned by fire of separation from the Lord:


\[220\]

\[216\] Ibid.
\[217\] Ibid.
\[218\] Mayarani Tondon, Ashtachhap Kavya Ka Sanskrit Mulayakan, p. 531.
\[220\] Ibid.
Their heart is like horn (Singi) and their eyes are the Khapsar’s to beg the Darshan’s of the Lord:

हदय सिंगी टेर मुरली, नैन खण्डर हाथ।

चाहती हरि दरस भिच्छा, देहिं दीनानाथ। ॥

The literature under study even objected to the way of life of the Yogis. It is stated that some people wander as Yogis having put on ochre coloured clothes, but within them there is much worldly thirst and desire for clothing and food:

रंगो बसाय डेमू वरि विचित्र नेहिं भिचिभाम् ॥

अर्थात डाःसारे धम्म डेमू डेमू देमू वो भाम् ॥

विचित्र मलभ गहारि ठ भिचिभी ठ हितम् ॥

Similarly, Braj writers do not have sympathy for Yogic practices. A Yogi puts on external marks, matted hair, pierced ears and ashes on his body. But the followers of Shri Krishna have actually suffered the burning of Viraha and show internal as well as external evidence of it in his/her devotion:

ऊंधी जोगए जोग हम नाहीं।

जोगी भ्रमत जाहि लगि भूले, सो ती है अप माहीं।

Krishandas, one of the Ashtachhap writers, emphasized that instead of Yogic activities a devotee should rely on the Bhakti and Seva of the Lord:

\[\begin{align*}
221 & \text{Ibid.} \\
222 & \text{Guru Granth Sahib, Var Majh Mahala 1, p.140.} \\
223 & \text{Surdas, Sursagar, Pad 10/3924, Vol. II, p. 477.}
\]
In Guru Granth Sahib Yogis are advised to give up the Yogic practices and are advised to meditate on Guru Sabad:-

Parmananddas is saying that those who smear ashes on their body and called them Udasi (Yogi) have only place in Kashi. Braj people are the followers of Saguna Svarupa of Lord Krishna:-

Among Ashtachhap writers only Surdas expressed his views about Yogis and Yogic practices in detail. In Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak is the one who deals in detail about Yogic practices. Guru Nanak's composition is known as Siddha-Goshat (dialogue with the Siddhas). It is included in Raga Ramkali.

**Renunciation (Sananyas):**

Both ideologies have no faith in renunciation. It is stated that the fire is not quenched by wandering in all the ten directions; the inner dirt is not removed by roaming in various garbs. Guru Nanak Dev is saying one should live 'detached-in attachment':-

\[227\]

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224 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 935, p. 370.  
225 Guru Granth Sahib, Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 879.  
226 Parmananddas, Parmanandsgar, Pad 836, p. 293.  
227 Guru Granth Sahib, Raga Suhi Mahala 1, p. 730.
Guru Amardas holds the similar view that one should live in world without attachments:

अंतर भविष्यत्त नमुना मित्र बड़ह नरवं नीति की है। ॥ २२८

Braj writers also emphasized that one ought not to retreat from the world, but instead live gratefully within it as an active participant, as a householder. Parmananddas says that one should live in one's house just like a passerby (Bataoo):

छाँड़ि अहार देह सुख और न चाहे काँठ।

'परमानंद' बसत है घर में जैसे रहत बटाउ।। ॥ २२९

Guru Granth Sahib further states that those who with true heart have achieved the true Sabad they have become Udasi while living within their homes:

मझ मझ मझ भवि धन दी भवि छिताम॥ २३०

Similarly Parmananddas said that in Krishna's Viraha the Gopi of the Gokul have made forest (Ban) in her house:

कृष्ण बिरह गोकुल की गोपी घर ही में बन कीनी।। २३१

Guru: Almighty God, whose qualities have been mentioned earlier in this chapter can only be realised by the grace of the True Guru:

श्री है मध्यम निरं नीक्षित कार्तिक भविष्यति धरे भवि धरि।॥ २३२
Ashtachhap writers have also recognised the necessity of Guru for the spiritual advancement of the human beings:

सतगुरु को उपदेश हृदय घरि, जिन भ्रम सकल निवारयो।
हरि भजि बिलंब छोड़ि सूरज सठ, ऊँचे टेरि फुकायो। \[233\]

God Itself is described as Guru. Guru Granth Sahib states that God is *Adi Guru* and *Jugad Guru* i.e. God is the Divine Teacher in the beginning and primal age:

अफिरि गुरुटे रमण॥ मुक्तापि गुरुटे रमण॥ \[234\]

or

अपि धर्मदेव धरमवृक्ष राजमदु गुरु भिलारु मेधी सीड़॥ \[235\]

In Braj literature similarly, one finds that Guru is mentioned in the same breath and on the same plane as God:

हरि-गुरु एक रूप नृप जानि। यामें कछु संदेह न आनि।
गुरु प्रसन्न, हरि प्रसन्न होइ।
गुरु कैं दुलित दुलित हरि जोइ। \[236\]

The knowledge of the Lord can not be obtained without the words of Guru:

विश्व गुरु सीष्कर वैमे बिनाभां॥ \[237\]

Without the true-Guru, the *Naam* is not obtained:

विश्व माइनास जहूँ र पाठिमें विश्व जहूँ बिश्वा महाशु॥ \[238\]
Guru is described as the guide who helps individual to get rid off from worldly affairs:

- Guru बिन्दु ऐसी कौन करे।
- माला-तिलक मनोहर बाना, ते सिर छत्र धरे॥
- भवसागर तैं बूढ़त राले, दीपक हाथ धरे।
- सूर स्याम गुरु ऐसे समरथ, छिन मैं ले उधफ़ै। 239

Guru Granth Sahib emphasized on the importance of 'Sabad Guru' which is its uniqueness. Guru Nanak clearly states to the Siddha's in Siddha Goshat that his Guru is 'Sabad Guru':

- मयूर गुरु मुख़ि तृप्ति चेहरा॥ 240
  or
- मयूर गुरु धीरा बलिह गंगीजन
  धिन मयूर नाम धूलुरहें॥ 241

On the other side, Ashtachhap writers were the faithful devotees of Vallabhadcharya and Vitthalnath. Chittswami, one of the Ashtachhap writers, states that he is the follower of Goswami Vitthalnath:

- हम तै श्री विठलनाथ उपासी।
- सदा सेवा श्री विठल नंदन, कहा करूँ जय काशी॥ 242

Govindswami declares that he repeated the name of Vallabhadcharya day and night:

- वल्लभ श्रीवल्लभ श्री वल्लभ गुण गावँ। 243

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240 Guru Granth Sahib, Sorath Mahala 1, p. 635.
241 Ibid., Ramkali Mahala 1, p. 943.
242 Chittswami, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 48, p. 62.
243 Govindswami, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 19, p. 118.
Chaturbhujdas states that he is the follower of Vitthalnath who has come to Kaliyuga in form of Avtar of Lord Krishna only to end the miseries of the Bhakts (devotees):-

श्री विद्याकुल-भूप।
भक्त- हित कलिजुग कृपा करि धरे प्रगट स्वरूप। 244

About this difference it may be said that in no Sampradaya of Bhakti movement 'Sabad' is considered as Guru except in Guru Granth Sahib. 245

**Naam Simran (The repetition of the Divine Name):** Both ideologies have given importance to the repetition of the Divine Name. They are of the view that salvation can be achieved only through Naam Simran. Even the lowest reach the highest domain with the repetition of God's Name. The one who has got the the True Name into his heart, can neither die nor be looted. They are purged of every sin and they attain eternal peace. Guru Granth Sahib lays great stress on the significance of the Naam Simran. The disciple is instructed to remember the Naam at all times:

छठूढ़ छठूढ़ मरि दिमि विभ्राढ़ी॥ 246

or

आठ धरि निभावू खूब राम॥ 247

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244 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, ed., Dr. Hargulal, Parkash Vibhag, Govt. of Inida, New Delhi, 2009, Pad 138, p. 69.
245 Satinder Singh, ed., *Comparative Indian Literature*, p. 305.
246 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 270.
In Braj literature too, great importance is given on reciting the

*Naam* of Lord:

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jo jan hirdh nam dhar.
Apst siddh nav nidhi ko bapurit lattkal lari fir.
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or

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jo bha sahar taribe chahiye dhar prabhu kar mahe.
pirindar 'govinda' ke prabhu ki gabe gun gun gabe.
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250 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 266.

The first and the foremost duty of a disciple is the remembrance
of the *Naam*, which is only the holy *Karma*:

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swah pabh bhitt samat pabh.
vid vre 'sambh sad khyabhal pabh.
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250

By repeating the *Naam* of the Lord, all the sins are washed
away, all the wishes are fulfilled and the state of final beatitude is
obtained:

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dekhiye bhitt bhakh vre soti.
hind yabe rahey vre soti.
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251

or

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nam sumirat bhaye paavan sakal khali kati ke jaya.
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252

With *Naam* the fear of death melts away:

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raha sukhshing rabh nabh sath bhav daad bhagi.
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253
Braj writers agreed with above cited view that without Naam Simran, one can not get rid off from transmigration:

\[\text{jo prabhu ko naam let bhav jal tari jaat he}\] \[254\]

or

\[\text{binu har saumiran mutki n hoid. kooti upaad karie jee koie}\] \[255\]

As world is like a fire so there is great necessity of Naam:

\[\text{miula khiye thalwa saubhagwad va bhum}\] \[256\]

or

\[\text{har har thalwa saumir jaane tahin}\] \[257\]

The real comfort lies in the repetition of the Name of God. With every breath God’s Name should be repeated:

\[\text{na be thame ko re tu mithi}\]

\[\text{mam saum thalwa saubhagwad vah bhul uhal bhima mithi}\] \[258\]

or

\[\text{sir baalani ki ek baat. sur saumir har har din rat}\] \[259\]

**Mukti (Nirvana):** The word ‘Mukti’ or ‘Nirvana’ has been used for God Itself:

\[\text{dhil dhipati sahishnau shravan. shravan sahishnau shravan}\] \[260\]

The ultimate aim of life is the attainment of the lotus feet of the Lord. The state of bliss and joy at the feet of the Lord is inexpressible:

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Guru Granth Sahib states that the Bhakta of God has no other desire except the attainment of the Beloved:

\[ \text{ਪ੍ਰਤ ਲਈ ਗੁਣਦਵੇਂ ਤਥਾ ਆਧਰਿਤ} || \]
\[ 
\text{ਅਧ ਹੀ ਧੀ ਜਪ ਉਸ ਰਚਿਤ} || 262
\]

Mukti, for Braj writers also means the Darshan, Seva and participation in Divine Lila of Shri Krishna:

\[ \text{ਸੇਵਾ ਮਦਨ ਗੋਪਾਲ ਕੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਹੋਣ ਮੀਠੀ} || \]
\[ \text{263} \]

A Bhakta of God has only desire for God’s love. That’s why he/she does not even think of Mukti:

\[ \text{ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਗੁਣ ਫ਼ਡੀ ਤੇ ਗੁਣ ਫ਼ਡੀ ਅਧ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਦਰਮਨ ਬਾਲਾਨ} || \]
\[ \text{264} \]

Braj writers have no desire of going to heaven. They considered Gokul better than Vaikuntha:

\[ \text{ਜੋ ਸੁਖ ਗ੓ਕੁਲ ਮੇ ਲਹੀ ਸੋ ਸੁਖ ਬੇਕੁੱਠ ਨਾਹਿ} || \]
\[ \text{265} \]

Caste: Guru Granth Sahib believes that there is no clan or caste while dwelling in the womb. Everything is created from the seed of Brahma:

\[ \text{ਬਾਜੂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰ ਭਗਤੀ ਵਚਨ ਰਾਜੀ} || 
\text{ਬੁਝ ਕਿੱਣੋ ਦੇ ਮਹਨ ਘੰਧਰੀ} || \]
\[ \text{266} \]
Ashtachaap writers expressed the view that caste and name are not important. Upon all the creatures there is one shadow of God:

राजि, गोत, कुल, नाम, गनत नाहिं, रंक होइ कैं रानी। 267

There is no caste in the next world:

सहर मंडिर घुड़भुड महज भाग्य मंडिर र घे। 268

God does not have care for the caste and creed of his worshipper:

राजि पाँति कोउ पूछु नाहिं, श्रीपाति कैं दरबार। 269

The caste and name both are raillery;

ढबड नाही ढबड राधे। मबड़ शीशा दिखा ढबडे। 270

Guru Nanak called him the lowest of the low and poorest of the poor. He is with these lowest and the poor. Further he is questioning why should he compare and copy the great and rich:

तीरा अंबारति तीरा मंडिर तीरी उ भारत तीरा।

तरजु डिखे वे मंडिर मंडि राडिका निधि लीला तीरा। 271

Despite the fact that Braj writers condemn caste pride, it is intriguing that they have completely dissociated themselves from Muslims and called them 'mlechchha'. 272

On the other side, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib apart from theoretical also took practical steps to root out caste system from society. Khushwant Singh rightly observes, "The Bhaktas had paid only lip service to the ideal of casteless society; Nanak took practical

268 Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 349.
270 Guru Granth Sahib, Var Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 83.
271 Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 15.
steps to break the vicious hold of caste by starting free community kitchens – *Guru-ka-langar*– in all centres and persuading his followers irrespective of their castes, to eat together*”.273

**Satsang**: Guru Granth Sahib and Braj litearture has laid great emphasis on *Satsang*. It is stated that *Satsang* is essential for a happy life and for achieving *Mukti*:

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Nanddas, one of the Ashtachhap writers, in his work *Bhramargit* expressed the same view:

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Their similarity on the importance of satsang can be observed from the couplet of Parmananddas which is included both in Guru Granth Sahib and Parmanandsagar:

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In Parmanandsagar

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**Woman**: Both ideologies have made woman the central character of their Holy composition and explained the spiritual path through her voice which will be discussed in the next chapter.

274 Guru Granth Sahib, Sarang Mahala 5, p. 1220.
276 Guru Granth Sahib, Raga Sarang, p. 1253.