Chapter – 3

PERCEPTION OF WOMAN : THE SPIRITUAL CONTEXT

Dictionary meaning of word 'perception' is, the way to think about something. In this chapter this term is used, to explain how Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have perceived woman in their writings. Both ideologies relate feminine imagery and symbols to the Divine Reality. The feminine imagery and symbols thus appear to bring woman within the orbit of emancipatory venture. As explained by Eliade quoted by Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, “Symbols have an existential value; symbols always point to a reality or situation concerning human existence; symbols preserve contact with the deep sources of life; symbols express the spiritual as life experience.”

The composers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have made woman the central character of their poetic composition. While talking of the matters of spirituality, the imagery of mother-child love (Vatsalya Bhava) and that of wife-husband (Madhura Bhava) have been used in Braj literature. Similarly in Guru Granth Sahib too, for comprehending the Nirguna God imagery of mother-child love and wife-husband has been widely employed. The metaphor that the Gurus found suitable for the expression of their intense, sacred and selfless love for the Divine is the sincere authentic love of a woman for

2 Richard Barz, The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya, p. 89.
the beloved, and that of a mother for her son; something that was considered spiritual in essence and not the negative quality of worldly attachment. Both these metaphors were appropriately used to express the true love of devotee for the Lord and of the Lord for the devotee.3

Guru Granth Sahib has used the imagery of mother-child love for depicting the love of devotee for God and of God for devotee. It is stated that as a mother loves and cares her child, same way, the devotee should have attachment to the Lord:

\[ \text{ਨੇਮੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਕਰਿਓਵਾਅਮੁੰ ਭਾਰੋ} \]
\[ \text{ਫੋਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੇਹੀ ਭਾਰੋ} \]4

As the mother is rejuvenated upon seeing her son, so is the Lord's humble servant imbued with It, through and through:

\[ ਭੁਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਸੀੰਚ ਭਾਰੋ \]
\[ ਹੀਓ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਨੂਹ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੀੰਚ ਭਾਰੋ \]5

In the above cited hymn Guru Arjan has used the imagery of mother-son love, instead of mother-daughter, to explain the relation between God and devotee. The verse is taken from daily life of the people. As during medieval period less importance is given to girls as compared to boys in the society, so Guru Arjan has used the imagery of mother-son love only to clarify his spiritual ideas to common people.

4 Guru Granth Sahib, Bhairo Namdev, p. 1164.
5 Ibid., Gauri Mahala 5, p. 198.
Ashtachhap writers also believed that to achieve the Lord Krishna one should worship him through the image of Mata Yashoda. Because Mata Yashoda has received that 'Anand' through her motherly devotion which is not even received by Devatas:

जसोंदा अति हरणिति गुण गावैः।
... ... ... ...॥
सिव विरंचि जाकों नहि पाबत, ताको लाड़ लड़ाबैः।६

It is the good fortune of Mata Yashoda that she considered Lord Krishna as her son:-

जसुमति भाग सुजगिनी हरि कृ वृत्त जानैः।७

Surdas stated that Mata Yashoda has worshipped Lord Krishna through Vatsalya Bhava and by doing so she has achieved Mukti by setting at home:-

बड़े भाग प्रगटे जसुदा कृ घर बैठे ही नव निधि आई।८

As at the sight of the child, mother becomes joyful, similarly the God’s devotee finds life by contemplating the God:

भगवा गणिव धेरि भविष्य॥

निद्रि वाच नत नीटिरि नटि भेविष्य॥९

Parmananddas, one of the Ashtachhap writers, clearly states that his Lord is his child and he feels happy by worshipping his Lord Krishna through the image of Mata Yashoda:

6 Chhitswami, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 108, p. 93.
7 Surdas, Sursagar, Pad 10/690, Vol. I, p. 232, also see Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 46, p. 15.
8 Ibid., Pad 250, Parishisht, Vol. II, p. 643, also see Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 43, p. 15.
9 Guru Granth Sahib, Basant Mahala 5, p. 1180.
Thus, they have metaphorically used the powerful symbiotic bond of mother-child relationship for the devotee and the Ultimate-Reality. It is stated that the mother loves to see her son eat. The Fish loves to bathe in the water. The True Guru loves to put food in the mouth of Gursikh:-

\[
\text{Kadva Prithividha labhe pujan kavhit} \|
\text{Mile Prithividha Choti Malu kavhit} \|
\text{Marditak Prithividha Jyotimah Bhudhi kavhit} \|
\]

Ashtachhap writers too, used this symbiotic bond through the relationship of Mata Yashoda and the Lord Krishna. Parmananddas in the voice of Mata Yashoda states that she becomes joyful with the sight of Bal Gopala (Lord Krishna). When she sees him playing in the home then she fills with Ananda. She takes Lord Krishna in her lap and plays with him by considering Lord as her son:-

\[
\text{Bal Binoda Gopal ke dekht Mohi Bhavai} \|
\text{Prem Pulkik Aanand Bhari Jusumati Guna Gavai} \|
\text{Bali Sanmat Dw Sanmari Aangna men Dhavai} \|
\text{Badan Chumi God liyo suj Jani Khilavai} \|
\]

Further, the mother image offers that just as a mother take care of her child, attentively watch over her/him and think about her/his

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10 Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 61, p. 21.
11 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Mahala 4, p. 164.
12 Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 80, p. 28.
needs, the same way God looks after Its devotee. As the mother rears the child after bearing her/him and keeps an eye on her/him and feeds her/him everywhere, similarly the Holy Preceptor preserves Its disciple:

\[
\text{:\begin{verse}
सिंह तलिय सूढ़ सिंह बलीड़ वचे तूढ़ि भज़िल\\
भूउू चालिय मृथि ये जिलमे भिठु भिठु येंख़िल\\
सिंह सिंधवाल गृहिमिथ रज्जु चि धृि धिलभिल।\end{verse}}\]

Ashtachhap writers also believed that as a mother takes care of her child and protects her/him, God also does the same for His devotee:

\[
\text{:\begin{verse}
यों न जाइ ऐसे के सरन।\\
प्रतिपालै पैले माता ज्यों चरन कमल भवसागर तरन।\end{verse}}\]

Like mother, God never counts the shortcomings of the devotee. As the child becomes annoyed with mother and mother makes the child joyful. Similarly for Sur (Surdas) Lord (Krishna) is like a mother who always forgives his mistakes:-

\[
\text{:\begin{verse}
जी बालक जननी सी बिलमे, माता ताकी लेइ मनाइ।\\
ऐसैंहि मोहि करी करूनामय, सूर र्याम्य ज्यों सुत-हित माइ।\end{verse}}\]

The son commits many mistakes but his mother does not hold them against him in her mind. Same way, God never counts the short
comings of the devotee:-

---

13 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Mahala 4, p. 168.
Except Kumbhandas all the Ashtachhap writers have used Vatsalya-Bhakti (mother-child relationship) to express their ideas. But Surdas and Parmananddas are incomparable in the use of this Bhava. They kept themselves mostly in the place of Yashoda instead of Nanda because of mother’s devotion to her child.

In this connection Nikky Singh’s observation is useful to quote, "Mother, the Infinite Matrix, and the Transcendent Reality are linked together by common attributes." Feminists in the West have supported this view. For example Sallie McFauge says:

“There is simply no other imagery available to us that have this power for expressing the interdependence and interrelatedness of all life with its ground. All of us, female and male, have the womb as our first home; all of us are born from the bodies of our mothers. What better imagery could there be for expressing the most basic reality of existence that we live and move and have our being in God?”

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17 Prabhu Dayal Meetal, Ashtachhap Parichay, p. 335.
Thus, Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have idealized the love of a mother for her child and held it up as an example for a devotee to God.

Turning to wife-husband imagery (*Madhura Bhava*), one can see that human soul (*Jivatma*) is represented as the wife who is forever seeking union with her Husband (God). One can attain union with God by following the wife's example of loving devotion:

\[ \text{गद्वा पेरिध बिखामे हिदु हारी} \]
\[ \text{हिदु हति मनु हीवे रघु हिदुहरी} \]

Thus *Suhagan* of Guru Granth Sahib is the guide on spiritual path:

\[ \text{यह मेंगान्ति राति सति धितु मातिश नीची} \]

One is advised to go and ask the *Suhagan* how does she obtains her Husband Lord:

\[ \text{नास्ति पुद्दय मुगान्ति रूपे बिखी बार्ढी मघु बार्ढीम} \]

In Braj literature too, *Gopi* is accepted as the Guru of the *Pushtimarg*. All the *Ashtachhap* writers have expressed their *Bhakti* through the image of *Gopi* but Surdas is best in it. Nanddas’ and Kumbhandas’ writings are also important from this view. Surdas by making *Gopika* as the guide of spiritual life announced that if

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anybody, male/female, worship the Lord Krishna with Bharta (husband) Bhava will get salvation without doubt:

गोपी-पद-रज महिमा, बिधि भृगु सौं कही |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>जो कोई भरता-भाव हृदय धारि हरि-पद घावे ।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>नारी पुरुष कोई होइ, श्रुति-ञ्च गति सो पावे ।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>तिनकी पदरज कोई जो, बृद्धिबन्ध भूँ माँह ।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>परसै सोई गोपिका गति पावे संशय नाहिं।</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nanddas in his work 'Siddanth Panchadhya' says that Gopis have followed a new way which was based on loving devotion towards the Lord. The Gopika's way is followed even by the Devatas like Sukhdev, Narad, Udho and Shivji. Because of this he called Gopi as the prime preceptor of Bhakti-Marga:

गोपिन अपनो प्रेम-पंथ न्यारोइ दिलरायो। |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>जिन गोपिन कौँ प्रेम निरळि चुक भये अनुरागी।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>उझी बुद्धि बिशुद्धनु सौं पुनि सो रज इंशै।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>संकर नीकं जानत सारद नारद गान।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>लतें सबै जगत-गुरु गोपिन गुरु करि मानत।</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Same view is expressed by Parmananddas. He stated that Gopi is the symbol of love. She has achieved Gopala (Lord Krishna) by sacrificing her mind, heart and wealth for the sake of Lord:-

28 Nanddas, Nanndas Granthawali, p. 33.
All human beings are considered *Gopis* and the Lord *Krishna* as the only male.\textsuperscript{30} Surdas says that all human beings are *Gopis* and the Lord *Krishna* is the only husband:

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{31} गोपिनि परम कंत हरि जान्यो, लल्यो न ब्रज-प्रभाव।।
\end{center}

Due to *Suhagan's* and *Gopi's* capacity to receive God, the writers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have identified themselves with wife imagery and expressed the ardor of their heart through her voice. Guru Nanak called the Lord only Husband:

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{32} मैं भेज टेंदु चुम्मा लही बेटी।।
\end{center}

Guru Nanak says, “Our Husband-Lord is dear. We are the servants, the hand-maidens of the Lord; our Husband Lord is only True”:\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{center}
हरलुः वै संभेलिते मैं भज धिमात्र।।
उम मैं भेजना चमीला माँधा धम्मु रहंगू।।
\end{center}

Guru Amardas called himself the wife of the Lord:

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{34} मे बामास्ति भेजन बृंदू वरंगू।।
\end{center}

Sant Kabir expressed the similar view. He stated, “The Lord is my Husband and I am the Lord’s Bride”:\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{29} Parmananddas, *Parmanand-sagar*, Pad 825, p. 289.
\textsuperscript{32} Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 357.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., Suhi Mahala 1, p. 729.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., Bhairo Mahala 3, p. 1128.
\end{center}
Surdas called Lord *Krishna* his Husband, without whom nobody could remove his sorrows:

\[
\text{मेरे तो तूम पति, तुमही गति, तुम समान को पावें।}
\]

But without you, dear Lord, nobody could remove my sorrows.

In another couplet he prayed in the voice of *Gopi* to receive the Lord as husband:

\[
\text{‘सूर’ स्याम सुन्दर पति पावे, यहै हमारी आस।}
\]

I find you beautiful, my Lord; you are my reality.

Krishhandas also considered Lord *Krishna* as husband:

\[
\text{‘कृष्णदास’ प्रभु रसिकराइ पति गिरिधर नवरंग पिय सुसनेहिं री।}
\]

I consider you my Lord, myrown beauty, my love, my grace.

Equating with Guru Granth Sahib, Braj writers have also used word *'Kant'* and *'Khasam'* for the Lord. Kumbhandas called *Girdhar (Krishna)* as his *Kant*:

\[
\text{इहै समै मि सिर गिरिधर नव कंत हिं।}
\]

I am in the presence of my Lord, my beauty, my grace.

Parmanandddas said that Lord *Krishna* is his *Kant*:

\[
\text{मदन गोपाल मनोहर मूरति मिलों भावों कंत।}
\]

I am in the presence of my Lord, my beauty, my grace.

Krishandas and Parmananddas used word *Khasam* for God in their works through the voice of *Gopi*.

These writers also think of themselves as being *Gopi* of Braj because of the *Gopi*’s capacity to achieve the Lord by her loving
devotion. In this connection Parmananddas is praying to the God that he should always be a Dasi to the Gopi:

रामस्वाति दासा वर मागो गोपिन की दसी मोहि कीजे। 42

Similarly, Nanddas in his work Roopmanjari guides the heroine (Roopmanjri) on spiritual path in the form of Indumati, by becoming female not male.

Being Gopis they are able to enjoy the Madhura Bhava in their Sakhi form which they assume at night. 43 Surdas is known as Champaklata, Parmananddas as Chandrabhaga, Kumbhandas as Vishakha, Krishandas as Lalita, Chhitswami as Paga, Govindswami as Bhama, Chaturbhujdas as Vimla and Nanddas as Chandrarekha. 44

Sikh Gurus too, have used word 'Mahala' to represent themselves as wives of God in their writings which are included in Guru Granth Sahib. Word 'Mahala' is associated with Sanskrit word Mahila (woman) and indicated that the title manifests the Gurus understanding of their relationship with God in terms of wife and husband. 45 They considered themselves as the wives of God and thus used word Mahala 1, Mahala 2, Mahala 3, and so on. Mahala word is standing for the Guru and 1 Means Guru Nanak Dev, Mahala 2 Means Guru Angad Dev and so on. However some scholars associate this word with Arabic word 'Mahala' means 'palace' which refers to the

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42 Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 576, p. 200.
43 Richard Barz, The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya, p. 90.
45 Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of The Sikh Scripture, p. 137.
Guru as the place where God resides and hence Mahala 1, Mahala 2 and so on.\footnote{Ibid.}

Metaphor of Suhagan and Duhagan woman are also used there. Suhagan is metaphorically used to represent Gurmukh whereas Duhagan symbolically resembles with Manmukh. Thus Suhagan-Gurmukh is a woman who is the beloved of the Lord, whether in the body of a man or woman:

\begin{quote}

\text{सुहागनि माना सुहागनि धिक लगिका छिद्रावरी॥}

\text{धिला वेलिचि तिहि चलिचि ममे जेके छवा॥ \footnote{Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 31.}}
\end{quote}

Suhagan wins the favour of her Spouse and enjoys union forever:

\begin{quote}

\text{पंज़ा मुखावि ने भीम झधे॥}

\text{वचि वशीचि दिति सतिक त भाइ॥ \footnote{Ibid., Asa Kabir Ji, p. 483.}}
\end{quote}

On the other hand, Duhagan is deprived of the union due to her ignorance of the Lord:

\begin{quote}

\text{धुहागनि माना सुहागनि धिक लगिका माहादु॥}

\text{धिला वेलिचि तर तिहिचि चुसा कषु माहादु॥ \footnote{Ibid., Asa Mahala 3, p. 426.}}
\end{quote}

Duhagan is in fact an ego-centered person (Manmukh) who being in illusion, remains away from God:

\begin{quote}

\text{अपि धीवि वेदः न भवाकर्ती दिति विति मिति छिद्रावरी॥}

\text{ताहिलि अकोलि द्रिमलि सलिचि द्रथु खट्टिचि दृंसे छाँढ़ि॥ \footnote{Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 38.}}
\end{quote}
Duhagan/Manmukh craves only for the riches of the world and not for the company of her Lord:

अनुभव विद्वानर र नानी सामान्य सम्बन्ध मद्द उद्दि। ॥

So, the life of Duhagan is pointless due to her inclination towards worldly pleasures:

मूते ने सी में सुनागारी धरु धिँदु गड़ड़ सामि। ॥

धिंदु दिक्कन खरि अपने नेती चुमै बाटि॥ ॥

Duhagan/Manmukh always remain away from God because of her unapproved qualities:

अनुभव समस्त र नानी सामान्य सम्बन्ध मे पुड़ युटि। ॥

अनुभव समस्त र नानी सामान्य सम्बन्ध मे पुड़ युटि। ॥

Duhagan is immersed in Maya due to her avariance, greed and pride. These are not the ways of meeting the Shauh (Husband):

तब तब अतुलण ली भाजी भाजिना भाजि महाती।

बिती घरी सवा पारीमे तरी बड़ी बाहि चिनारी फिरारी।॥

Duhagan has great attachment to Maya but she does not care for Lord. So, she always remain away from Lord:

बस्ता भाजिना रजम बुझार।

रजिन हरी वरुगारी ता धिंदु अतुलि महाती। ॥

In Ashtachhap writings also, there is description of Suhagan and Duhagan. Surdas says that Suhagan has received the God:

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51 Ibid., Ramkali Mahala 3, p. 950.
52 Ibid., Suhi Mahala 3, p. 785.
53 Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 37.
54 Ibid., Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.
55 Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 60.
Suhagan (Bhakta) of the Lord received him by forgiving the worldly things and pleasures:

मेरे कहये तु मान सुहागिन अति सुंदर सुकुमार।

Parmananddas writes that Duhagan does not feel happy on the sight of the beloved and is totally immersed in worldly pleasure:

कमल मुख देखत तुपति न होइ।

यह सुख कहा दुहागिनि जाने रही निसा भर सोए।

The final stage of spiritual path, the state of eternal bliss in union with God, the mingling of light with light, is also defined through the image of Gurmukh/Suhagan, who attains the company of her husband:

अबरल मुँहरि दुह धारिणा अभिलाभी त बैठे भोई त धारिणा।

बीसाघु धेम्मे भेमे भवनुल गुजनुले सज्ज धारिणा।

Ashtachhap writers also explained that if a devotee of Lord Krishna approaches him with Gopi Bhava then that devotee enjoy the union with Lord Krishna:

कृष्णदास सरामी बस कीन्हे प्रेम-पुंज की चोपी।

बहु नायक है बिलसत आपु। जाकी सिव पावत नहीं जापु।

लाकौ ब्रजनारी पति जानै। कोउ आदेहौं, कोउ अपमानौं।

57 Govindswami, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 50, p. 53.
58 Parmananddas, Parmanandsgar, Pad 726, p. 253.
59 Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Raga Mahala 4, p. 78.
60 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 302, p. 111.
Returning to the metaphor of *Duhagan* in Guru Granth Sahib, it is seen that *Duhagan* and *Maya* both are associated due to their ignorance of Ultimate Reality:

\[
\text{ਮੈਂ ਦੱਖਣ ਦੁਖਣ ਦੁਖਣ}\;\|
\]

\[
\text{ਖੁੰਦੀ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੇਖਣ}\;62
\]

Woman is also compared with wealth. The fool loves gold and woman:-

\[
\text{ਖਰਾਦ ਦਰਪੀ ਖੇਤੇ ਗ਼ਰਾਲ}\;63
\]

There is pleasure of gold and silver, pleasure of woman, the pleasure of the fragrance of *sandalwood*:-

\[
\text{ਜਮੂ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਜਮੂ ਤੁਪਾ ਦੇਖਣ ਜਮੂ ਖਾਸ਼ਹ ਬੀ ਰੂਪ}\;64
\]

Because of this comparison some Western scholars pointed out that in Guru Granth Sahib, woman is often associated with *Maya*, "indicating its apprehension of the female as a barrier to the attainment of emancipation."65

It must be kept in mind that these are philosophical concepts which needed to be discussed in their context. Apart from wife there is also mention of mother, father, son and daughter in Guru Granth Sahib, as the objects which induce to forget God:

\[
\text{ਖੇਪਲ ਮਾਤਾ ਧੀਗ ਸੰਮਾਲੀ}\;\|
\]

\[
\text{ਖੇਪਲ ਮੂਰ ਦੋਲਕ ਮੂਰ ਦੋਲੀ}\;66
\]

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64 *Ibid.*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 15.
So, the definition of *Maya* is equally applicable to both man and woman as J.S. Grewal informed, “The husband is also a part of *Maya* and the woman is a dupe as well as a part of *Maya*.\(^{67}\)

Furthermore some scholars objected that there are negative approaches towards woman in Guru Granth Sahib. Among these scholars one is Jakobsh who has represented Guru Ramdas as a high critic of woman on the basis of his one hymn\(^ {68} \):

\[

dhun ma naarikar bhoj vaagay me avarhita avam bhal \|

dev dvi anar me bhang bhal \|

dhun bhoj me kaur me bhang bhal \|

dhun bhoj me kaur me bhang bhal \|

dhun bhoj me kaur me bhang bhal \|

dhun bhoj me kaur me bhang bhal \|
\]

The view taken by Jakobsh is partial and therefore, misleading.\(^ {70}\) Guru Ramdas talks of the *Manmukh* in contrast with those who act in accordance with the Guru's instruction; the sinful and ignorant men are those who listen to their women out of lust as a moral weakness, and ignore the Guru's instruction.\(^ {71}\) Even in the end of the hymn it is clarified that both woman and man are the creation of God.

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68 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 34.
69 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Mahal 4, p. 304.
In *Ashtachhap* writings, particularly in Surdas, woman is compared with *Avidya* (ignorance) which according to him is a form of *Maya* responsible for the sufferings of man:

तहों अविद्या नारि प्रधान।

Woman is also compared with wealth. Both of them are considered as waves of elusive passion. In the end these passions will slip from man’s hands. Man is advised to take refuge in the Name of Lord before he leaves the world and lost to the flames:

अंतर गहत कनक-कमिनि की, हाय रहेगी पवित्र।
तजि अभिमान, राम कहि बौरे, नतल्क ज्वाला तविरे।

Here it must be kept in mind that these references are contextual and needed to be understood in their context.

Another objection about the use of wife imagery in Guru Granth Sahib is that it allowed the masculine identity to God. Doris R. Jakobsh pointed out that the Ultimate Reality in Sikh scripture is most often conceived in masculine terms, as *Akal-Purakh, Karta-Purakh*:

Further in the Sikh Scripture, it is stated that there is one Husband (Lord) and all other beings Its brides:-

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74 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 17.
There are so many brides of the One Husband (Lord):-

Here it must be cleared that in Guru Granth Sahib both feminine and masculine imagery is used to comprehend the Ultimate Reality. God is addressed as mother, father, sister, brother and friend – thus as both male and female:

“God is our Mother and Father; we are God’s children”:

Even in Guru Granth Sahib at one place, God’s beauty is presented in terms, supposedly appealing to the woman – Her beautiful eyes and sparkling teeth, sharp nose and long luxurious hair, Her lustrous body cast in gold, Her necklace like *Krishan’s*, Her pleasing gait, Her sweet voice, Her alluring youth, Her rhythmic movement and Her majesty. It is like the following water of *Ganges*:

---

Guru Granth Sahib affirmed quite sincerely that It is God and God alone who has assumed the form of both man and woman for self-manifestation and self-realization:

आपे पुलतु आपे वी रजी ||
आपे पामा आपे माती || 82

But, "the commentators, interpreters and translators of Sikh Scripture", as Nikky Singh points out, "have primarily elaborated the masculine principle; the feminine so powerful and eloquent – has been overlooked." 83 They have invariably referred to the One as "He" and kept the male image at the centre of their discussions. 84 Because of this tendency some Western scholars believe that Sikh scripture like other scriptures allow masculine identity to God. It must be kept in mind that although imagery is used to comprehend the Ultimate Reality yet Guru Granth Sahib does not consider God to be male or female. God in Guru Granth Sahib is Nirguna whose gender cannot be determined. God is Ajuni (unborn). It belongs to neither sex. In other words the Ultimate Reality is beyond gender:

81 Ibid., Vadhans Mahala 1, p. 567.
82 Ibid., Maru Mahala 1, p. 1020.
84 Ibid., p. 52.
While addressing to Qazi's, in one of his hymn Kabir said, “Holy Scripture says that Allah is True and Allah is neither male nor female”:

As, God is beyond gender, so to avoid misconceptions, 'It' is a better word to be used for God instead of 'He' as informed by Nikky Singh. In this work also, word It is used for God of Guru Granth Sahib to represent Its Nirguana state. Guru Granth Sahib considered God Ajuni. It has no form, feature and colour.

As far as Braj literature is concerned these writers also called God mother, father, Guru, brother and friend:

God is the mother, father, brother and sustainer of the world. God forgives the mistakes of individual's:-

Even the beauty of the Lord Krishna is explained in the terms specifically applied to the woman. Surdas writes that the Lord has

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85 Guru Granth Sahib, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 685.
89 Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani Mahala 5, p. 283.
taken the form of woman and worn Sari and applied make-up of flowers:

तब हरि भेष धरयों जुवती को। सुंदर परम भाव तौ जी को।।
सारी कंचुकि केसरि टीकों। करि सिंगार सब फूलनि ही को।।

In another couplet, he explained that the Lord has applied Kajal to eyes, filled vermillion with a string of pearls in the parting of hair and a bindi on the forehead. He worn Dandni Sari and by seeing Him in the disguise of a woman, Radha and Gopis are laughing:

ब्रज जुवती मिलि नागरि, राधा मैं मोहन लै आई।
लोचन आंजि, भाल बंदी दै, पुनि पुनि पाइ पराई।।
बेनी गूँधि, माँग सिर पारी, ब्रजू ब्रजू कहि गाई।
प्यारी हेसति देखि मोहनमुख, जुवती बने बनाई।।

These writers worship the Lord in Yogul Rupa (both as male and female). They have made no difference between Krishna and Radha. They have asserted that Radha and Krishna are one and the same:

स्याम स्यामा स्यामा स्याम।
..............................................।
‘कुम्भनास’ प्रभु गिरिघर स्यामा, स्यामा स्याम रसिकता धाम।।

They have the same nature and qualities (Svarupa and Guna):

एक ही वेष एक रूप गुण गिरिघर श्याम रसिका गोरी।

The two components of the Divine pair are said to be as inseparable as wave and water, as mirror and shadow:

95 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 98, p. 34.
96 Kumbhandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 27, p. 63.
They are a single soul housed in two bodies:

Lord Krishna and Radha are the one and the same. They have one soul housed in two bodies without any doubt:

According to them, Parm Purush Krishna is the Shaktiman and Prakriti Radha is the Shakti (power) of Lord by means of which Shri Krishna Parabrahman manifests the world for playing of his Lila.

So, both of them cannot be separated:

They considered that Lord Krishna is Parabrahman and he has the capacity to take form of both male and female:

Lord Krishna himself is the male, and he himself is the female:

---

98 Ibid.
100 Prakriti and Purush are the ancient male and female principles of Spirit and Matter.
But it is very surprising that all the temples of Vallabh Sampradya, to whom Ashtachhapp writers belong, are only of Lord Krishna’s instead of Yogul Rupa.105

The use of female imagery to express Bhakti towards God is also extended to include females in the animal world. Guru Arjan in a hymn called himself fish and God water:

\begin{center}
\textit{मीति महली रुभ तीब उध विह लिंड मने।}
\end{center}  

\textit{106}

Guru Nanak seeks to identify himself with the females of several species to express his yearning for union. He wishes to be a doe (\textit{Harni}) living in the jungles, or a Koel (\textit{Kokil}) singing in the mango grove, or a fish (\textit{Machuli}) dwelling in the waters, or a she-serpent (\textit{Nagin}) within the earth, in each case enjoying the proximity of the Lord:

\begin{center}
\textit{उन्हीं वेंह वानि घमन बंदे भूल चूटि धारा।}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{तुह धवमटी में मयू भिल राचि राचि उठँड मन्दि सीहे॥}
\end{center}

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\begin{center}
\textit{वेंह भाँति घमां मयू मगचि मजर धीरज॥}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{मयूमि मुखांदि में भिल रचमि तुच्छ अथरु॥}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{महली वेंह नहि घमा सीमा संग भरि मगरि॥}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{छुट्टावरि भाँति में मयू उठँड भिलिस्त्री घाँ धमचि॥}
\end{center}

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Among Ashtachhap writers Surdas, who has composed a large number of couplets, expressed his Bhakti towards the Lord Krishna through the medium of cows of Braj. He says that it is the good fortune of cows that they have achieved the Lord:

देखी धन्य भाग गाईनि के, प्रीति करत वनबारी।

In Bhramargit Gopis are informing Udho to tell Krishna that the cows of Braj are suffering extreme misery in his Viyoga. The water (tears) continuously comes from their eyes and they are repeating the name of the Lord Krishna. They are in the habit of going and smelling the places where Krishna has grazed them. In Viraha they become like fish without water:

उधी इतनी कहिहाँ जाँ।
अति कृप गात भई ये तुम बिनु परम दुखारी गाँ।।
जल समृह भरतल दोउ अलियाँ, हँकित लीन्हे नाँउ।।
जहाँ जहाँ गो दोहन कीन्हों, सूर्खित सोई ठाँउ।।
परति पछार खाँ छिन ही छिन, अति आतूर हैं दीन।
मानहुं ‘सूर’ कहि डारी हैं, बारि मध्य तै मीन।।

It may be said that the use of feminine imagery and female voice by both ideologies, is an indicative of the high regard that they have

for woman. But some Western scholars pointed out that the use of feminine imagery and female voice in Guru Granth Sahib is certainly not a unique thing as many North Indian Saints have also used it.\textsuperscript{112}

About this it must be said that the use of feminine imagery and voice is not only confined to North Indian Saints but also used by the Prophets of the Old Testament, Christian Saints and Sufi Shaikhs.\textsuperscript{113} Michael Drayton, an English poet of medieval Europe, published the poem 'The Muses Elizium' in 1630. In this poem nuptial celebration is associated with mystical union.\textsuperscript{114} In the New Testament, the Church has also been designated as the Bride of the Christ.\textsuperscript{115} The Sufis adapted the same model of the lover and beloved.\textsuperscript{116} The beloved is male and the lover is female. In India one of the earliest examples of it is Amir Khusro's devotional poetry addressed to his preceptor, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya in the form of love songs of a female.\textsuperscript{117} However, the major works in Sufi poetry such as Mulla Daud's 'Chandayan', Malik Muhammad Jaisi's 'Padmavat', Manjhan's, 'Madhumali' and Shah Qasim's 'Hans Jawahir' revert to the Arabic-Persian model of the male seeker and the female object.\textsuperscript{118} But the vocabulary and the sense of this idea used by others differ in many respects from the form and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] Sayed Naqi Husain Iafri, Essays on Literature, History and Society, p. 44.
\item[117] G.S. Talih, Indian Poetry : Sacred and Secular, p. 20.
\item[118] Sayed Naqi Husain Iafri, Essays on Literature, History and Society, p. 44.
\end{footnotes}
essence of Guru Granth Sahib. It becomes clear by taking an example from Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. Although Braj writers explained the spiritual path through the image of Gopi at philosophical level but practically woman is not directly related to God. She is secondarily related through the medium of her husband. Husband is considered as God for her and his service is advised to wife by Ashtachhap writers:

अव तुम भवन जाहु, पति पूजहु परमेस्वर की नाई। ।

Wife is advised by Surdas to do the service to husband by giving up her all pleasures:

कपट तज पति करी पूजा, कहा तुम जिय गुनी।

Contrary to this, the wife image of Guru Granth Sahib devotes a very direct encounter between her and the Transcendent Groom. A passage from Nikky Singh’s work is useful to reproduce here, "In many cultures, women do not stand in a direct relation to the Ultimate Reality and are connected to It secondarily, through the male. Western feminist scholars have voiced their regret over the structure of patriarchal law in the Old Testament, where only the male heads of family are addressed directly. On Indian soil also, we find patriarchy as the dominant motif: Pandits and Priests—the mediators between Brahman and the people in case of Hinduism—are invariably male. Ulema—the religious lawyers and theologian-play an analogous

role in the Islamic world. Guru Nanak's bridal symbol suggests a freedom from patriarchal mediums; without anyone standing in between, the bride directly and passionately seeks to embrace the wholly other, her Transcendent Groom.”

To conclude this part it is said that Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have widely used the mother imagery, wife imagery and imagery of female species from the animal world to explain the spiritual thought. Guru Granth Sahib states that a devotee should have same attachment to the Lord just as a mother have for her child. Because of mother's devotion to her child Ashtachhap writers have mostly kept themselves in place of Yashoda instead of Nanda. Further, the mother image offers that just as a mother has care for her child, similarly God looks after Its devotee.

Wife imagery of the both ideologies states that one can attain union with God by following the wife's example of loving devotion. Thus, Suhagan of Guru Granth Sahib and Gopi of Braj literature are the Gurus (preceptors) on spiritual path. Due to Suhagan and Gopi's capacity to achieve God, the writers of both ideologies have identified themselves with wife imagery and expressed the ardor of their hearts through her voice. They called themselves the wives of the Lord.

The writers of Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature even include the imagery of female species from the animal world. Guru Nanak seeks to identify himself with the females of several species to

express his yearning for union. He wishes, he is a doe (Harini) living in the jungles or a Koel (Kokil) singing in the water or a she-serpent (Nagin) within the earth in each case enjoying the proximity of the Lord.

Among Ashtachhap writers Surdas also expressed his Bhakti towards Lord Krishna through the medium of cows of Braj. In Bhamaragit Gopis are informing to Udho to tell Krishna that cows of Braj are suffering extreme misery in his Viyoga. They are in the habit of going and smelling the places where Krishna has grazed them. The water (tears) continuously coming from their eyes they are repeating the Name of the Lord Krishna.

On the basis of the hymns above cited it is authenticated that the spiritual path of living is defined through feminine imagery and female voice in Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature. But it is interesting to note that all the writers of both idealogies are male then why have they used female imagery? It is discussed in the next part of this chapter.

**QUEST FOR FEMININE QUALITIES**

Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature have laid great emphasis on the Bhakti of Lord. 'Navdha' Bhakti (devotion of nine types) is considered main source of worship. These nine types of Bhakti are Srawan (listening); Kirtan (singing in praise of God); Simran (remembring); Pad-Sevan (worship of feet); Archana (offerings); Vandana (prayer); Dasya Bhava (humility); Sakhya Bhava (friendship)
and Atam-Nivedan (sacrifice of self). Navdha Bhakti is mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib\textsuperscript{122} and Braj literature.\textsuperscript{123}

**Srawan**: It is the first type of Navdha Bhakti. Its method is to hear or listen to the greatness of the Lord:

\[ \text{मुहूर्ति मृणुण बुद्ध रंगो } \text{।} \ \text{।} \ \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} \text{।} 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\textsuperscript{125}Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 83. \textsuperscript{126}Surdas, *Sursagar*, Pad 10/620, Vol. I, p. 209. \textsuperscript{127}Guru Granth Sahib, Majh Mahala 1, p. 150.**
During the time of Guru Arjan its importance grew apparently. The effect of Kirtan goes beyond life-related issues—it results in eliminating the fear of death and helps to attain liberation:

Ashtachhap writers have also explained the importance of Kirtan in Bhakti. Kirtan to them is the singing aloud the names and the virtues and the events in the Lilas of Shri Krishna. Kirtan is intendend to fill the hearts of the Bhakts with the emotional experience of the various Lilas which were performed by Shri Krishna. Kumbhandas stated, “My only wish is to sing the praise of Girdhar (Lord Krishna)”: 

The most famous Kirtans in the Vallabhacharya Sampradaya are those sung, together with musical accompaniment that is often excellent, before the Divine Svarupa at the periods of Darshana in the temples belonging to the Sampradaya.

Simran: Great importance is given on the repetition (Simran) of Name of God. It is believed that with Simran all the sins are washed away and happiness is obtained:

128 Ibid., Vadhans Mahala 3, p. 593.
129 Ibid., Sorath Mahala 5, p. 623.
130 Kumbhandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 64, p. 77.
131 Richard Barz., The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya, p. 83.
It is stated that as the stained clothes become clean by washing with soap, same way, the mind which is stained and polluted by sin, cleans only by the Naam Simran:-

भूम भलीडी धन्य देति ||
चे ममुः ललीभे हिन्दु पेंति ||
हलीभे भजू धर्म वे मीग ||
हिन्दु पैये तहै वे तीम ||

Krishandas stated that with Naam Simran all the the Jivas of Kaliyuga become pure:-

नाम सुमिरत भये पावन सकल खल कलि के जिया ||

**Pad Sevan** : Pad-Sevan has great importance in the field of Bhakti. Pad Sevan means, “the act of honouring or worshipping the feet”. In Vallabhacharya Sampradaya it referes to the reverent service which Bhakta (devotee) performs before the Svarupa of Shri Krishna. With it all the wishes of devotee are fulfilled as Krishandas has informed:

अनन्य होइ चरनारविंद भजु सकल पूरन काम ||
Its importance is also explained by Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan Dev stated, “I wash your feet, I massage and clean them; I give this mind to you”:-

अपने अन्तर्जाति भक्ति पंचन्ति रूपे भगवान आप से आजमा॥ 138

Archana and Vandana: Archana in Vallabha Charya Sampradaya means the act of worship of the Svarupa. Worship in the Sampradaya, as explained in second chapter139, differs from the type of worship done in an ordinary Hindu temple.140 Vandana, the respectful paying of homage to the deity, is usually done with Archana.141 With Archana (Puja) and Vandana a devotee of God can get the state of blissfulness:

पद-सेवन-अरचन उर धरै। 142

Archana and Vandana are also mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan stated, “O Divine Lord, I worship and adore you; I bow down before you”:-

धुमन अन्तर्जाति रूपे बीज बपजान॥ 143

Dasaya Bhava: It is the devotional emotion expressed in the manner of a servant's attitude towards his Master. This is the prayer of your slave; please enlighten my heart:-

भग्न उरदे बी धरैउडिक विच बदव भवान॥ 144

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139 See II chapter for the worship of Vallabhacharya Sampradaya, pp. 27-28.
140 Richard Barz, The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya, p. 84.
141 Ibid.
143 Guru Granth Sahib, Gauri Mahala 5, p. 217.
144 Ibid., Bilwal Mahala 5, p. 818.
In this type, the devotee emphasizes the glory and power of the Lord with deep humility:

बाम बाहु राख्यो गिरिनायक दासनि को सूख दीनो।।\(^{145}\)

**Sakhyā Bhava**: In this form the devotee worship the Lord as a friend.

Guru Nanak stated that he has no other friend like the Lord:-

गौरिमा भीड़ू यानी मैं बेदनी।।\(^{146}\)

*Ashtachhapp* writers also used this form. They considered *Shri Krishna* as their friend who took the cows out to graze and he played games with other cowherds. Nanddas in his work ‘*Sudhama Charit*’ informed that anybody who worships the Lord *Krishna* with Sakhyā *Bhava* like *Sudhama* will achieve the final fruit:

परम चरित सुदामा नित सुनि। हरद्रिक-कमल में राखी गुनि गुनि।।

‘नंददास’ की कृति संपूरन। भक्ति सुलिंग पावे सोइ तूरन।।\(^{147}\)

**Atam-Nivedan**: It means ‘self-dedication’. In this *Bhava* the devotee sacrifices everything and completely depends on God’s grace:

उठ भठ गुज धवि देंविर भठ गीमा भोज रूलिंग।।\(^{148}\)

Further complete surrender to God is stressed in *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is stated that one should give up selfhood and so obtain Husband Lord; other clever tricks are of no use:-

अपु गाढ़ीयौ उ भठ धवियौ अहितु बैमी चुड़किंग।।\(^{149}\)

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146 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1027.
147 Nanddas, *Nanddas Granthawali*, p. 188.
Chaturbhujdas, one of the *Ashtachhap* writers, also explained its importance:

रन मन धन वारति हैं सब जसोमति नान्दराई।  

By self-dedication *Vallabhacharya*’s devotees give themselves up utterly to *Shri Krishna* and no longer take any thought of their own welfare, for they have placed themselves completely in *Shri Krishna*’s protection.  

Apart from these nine types, there are two other forms of *Bhakti* i.e. *Vatsalya Bhava* and *Madhura Bhava* which are related to the two dominant female feelings of mother and wife. It has seen in the earlier part of the chapter that in Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature these two types are largely used despite of the fact that all the writers are male. Some Scholars arised objections about the use of these two female imageries for comprehending Lord. Jakobsh concludes that ‘addressing the Divine through the feminine voice allowed for the maintenance of masculine identity of God’.  

Here it should be pointed out that female imagery and voice have used neither to permit masculine identity to God, nor to place woman secondarily, but to showcase the qualities of woman. To achieve the Ultimate Reality, one should have the qualities of love, devotion, sacrifice, fear of God, patience, forgiveness, truthfulness and humility. As woman has these qualities in abundance, more than a man, so both ideologies (Guru

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150 Chaturbhujdas, *Pad-Sangrah*, Pad 36, p. 46.  
151 Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*, p. 84.  
152 Doris R. Jakobsh, *Relocating Gender in Sikh History*, p. 27.
Granth Sahib and Braj Literature) considered these feminine qualities very helpful in the quest and the attainment of the Lord.

Guru Granth Sahib glorifies these feminine qualities and enjoins upon all humanity to cultivate them for comprehending Lord:

\[ व्रजि सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी सुह्मी। \]

It is stated that she charms her Beloved with her virtues and so obtains her Lord:

\[ सुह्मिः तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि तर्थि। \]

Woman is the one who has the qualities to recognize and achieve the God. She has the capacity to chart out the way that makes the Ultimate Reality accessible to human experience. Everybody asks her if she has ever seen the God:

\[ व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि व्रजि। \]

One is advised to go and ask the Suhagan by what qualities she pleases her Lord:

\[ सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः सुहगाः। \]

Further it is asked that by what qualities, words or rich jewels of speech and dress she has received the Lord:

\[ वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः वर्दः। \]

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154 Ibid., Maru Mahala 1, p. 1088.
155 Ibid., Tilang Mahala 1, p. 725.
156 Ibid., Malar Mahala 1, p. 1257.
157 Ibid., Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 17.
158 Ibid., Shloka Farid, p. 1384.
To the above question she responds by saying that three qualities are very essential to please the Lord; these are humility, forgiveness and sweet speech:

हिस्ट्टे मृ अध्यु धर्मट गुण निवाद महीमा भंडा॥
हें जैं जैं जैं जैं जैं जे भं सम भंडी भंडा॥ 159

Similarly, among Ashtachhap writers, Krishandas is asking to Gopi that with which qualities she has received Lord Krishna:

या ही गुण ते सुनु हो प्यारी? तू मोहन गोपाल हिं भाई। 160

Gopi answered that with feminine qualities, she has achieved the Lord:

निपुन नागरी गुननि आगरी, पीताम्बर गहि लीनौ। 161

They have emphasized on feminine qualities because of the fact that man is often conceived as complicated and subtle whereas woman as plain and transparent:

सली भाव सहज होय सजनी पुरुष भाव होय भंग। 162

Krishandas has also laid importance to this idea by declaring that in the whole world nobody has the capacity and quality like Braj woman to comprehend God:

ब्रज-बनिता तेरी समला को त्रिभुवन में नहीं को है॥ 163

159 Ibid.
160 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 50, p. 18.
161 Chhitswami, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 74, p. 73.
162 Parmananddas, Parmanandsagar, Pad 837, p. 294.
163 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 364, p. 133.
Both ideologies believe that without feminine qualities True Lord cannot be achieved. Guru Nanak in feminine voice is saying that he is totally without virtue; he has no virtue at all. How can he meet his Husband Lord:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{चन्द्र अक्षय मै गुढ़ तथी बेहीं ||} \\
\text{बिंठै संत बेह भिलाण बेहीं ||} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In this regard Prabhjot Kaur rightly says, “Guru Nanak's message, that only and only by becoming a woman, i.e., by cultivating the spiritual qualities of a woman, one can have any spiritual experience; is not only revolutionary but totally out of sync with the religious temperament of those times.”

Parmanandadas also declared that if wife (Jivatma) does not have qualities then everything is useless:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{बिनु गुण अभरन सब ही फीके ||} \\
\end{align*}
\]

**Love:** That woman (human being) whose mind is always absorbed in love of the Lord easily achieves God:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{तारी अंतरिम मेंढी ममउदित भरी विभारु ||} \\
\text{मेंढा मलविद सुगज्जी माचे पूरभ अभारु ||} \\
\end{align*}
\]

That wife is called *Suhagan* who has love for the Lord. Love is the true wealth of her life and she experiences a kind of bliss in the company of her True Lord:

164 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Suhi Mahala 1, p. 750.
167 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Raga Mahala 1, p. 54.
Ashtachhap writers emphasized that to comprehend the Lord Krishna quality of love is foremost. God is received with love not with artificial and outward things:

प्रीतम प्रीत ही तैं चें थिये।
जदपि रूप गुण शील सुंपरता इन बातन न रखिये।

Chhitswami also says that he received the Lord with the quality of love:

प्रीतम प्रीति तैं बस कीनो।
उर अंतर ते ख्याम मनोहर, नैकरहु जान न दीनो।

Similar view is expressed by Parmananddas:

गोविंद प्रीति के बस कीनो।

Surdas and Nanddas choose the love of Gopi to express their ideas and thought in Bhramargit. In Bhramargit the conversion between the Gopi and Udho is used to reveal the supremacy of 'Prem Bhakti' over 'Gyan Bhakti'. Udho has been made the mouthpiece of 'Gyan Bhakti'. He tries to dissuade Gopi from the path of 'Prem' by an appeal to her intellect. Contrary to this, Gopi is generally not inclined to enter into a logical discourse or intellectual inquiry. She said to Udho that her only concern is to love Lord Krishna:
In Bhramargit Nanddas' Gopi is more logical than Surdas'.

She answered to the each question of Udho with logic. She answered to Udho that as there is no comparison between diamond and glass, similarly 'Prem Bhakti' is more important than Gyan and Yoga:

\[
\text{ग्यान जोग सब कर्म तें परे प्रेम ही सौंच।}
\]
\[
\text{हैं या पट्टर देत हैं हीरा आगे काँच।} \quad 175
\]

Finally Gopi score a victory over Gyan and Yoga on behalf of her 'Prem Bhakti':

\[
\text{देखि प्रेम गोपिन कौ ज्ञान गरब गयिय दूरि।} \quad 176
\]

It is also explained in Guru Granth Sahib that God is not pleased by Hatha Yoga, not by various religious robes but only by loving devotional worship:-

\[
\text{उठि ह धडीनै हा घड़ू केि।}
\]
\[
\text{.................................}\]
\[
\text{प्रेम बनाओ रूखि भू कतििआधिया।} \quad 177
\]

So, Gopi has followed her different path (of Prem) from Gyan and Yoga:

\[
\text{ज्ञान बिना नहिं मुक्ति इह जु घड़ित गन गायो।}
\]
\[
\text{गोपिन अपनो प्रेम-पंच न्यारोड़ दिलरायो।} \quad 178
\]

---

175 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 164.
177 Guru Granth Sahib, Dhansari Mahala 1, p. 686.
178 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 33.
Guru Granth Sahib also explained that with Prem (love) God can be easily achieved by the devotee. It is said that a woman (devotee) who loves her Beloved, she is always good:-

रात्रि भविष्यित मन्म दर्श धिक ते देवि धिकार || 179

Finally it is stated that with Lord’s love, true wealth (Naam) is obtained:-

स तै हेमिन धरणार धारी अहू उन्ही रेड लाटीम || 180

About the quality of love Prabhjot Kaur remarks, “The only metaphor Guru Nanak found suitable for the expression of his intense love for the Divine was the love of a wedded woman for her beloved husband.” 181

Woman is so absorbed in love of Lord that she has left the ordinary world and its cares altogether:

अदरुत तिंतमल मिष्टि भल्ला पदिशा धवलजी लान कृतली || 182

In love Gopi abandoned her home, mundane occupations and care of her family reputation:

बिस्री लोक-लाज गृह-कारज बंधु पिता अरु माई || 183
अरी में लोकवाद को मार छाँड़ौ मातपिता की लाज री || 184

**Devotion and Viraha:** With love, quality of devotion is also necessary. Both ideologies believe that the gap between the Divine Reality and the
individual is bridged by following the woman's example of loving devotion. Without the pain of separation love cannot grow:

\[
\text{बिरह दुःख जहाँ नाहिं नैकहें, तहँ न उपजे प्रेम}. \text{185}
\]

In order to be sure of the sincerity of love for Shri Krishna the devotee, like the Gopi, must suffer period of Viraha:

\[
\text{कृष्णबिरह नहिं बिरह-प्रेम अच्छलन कहाँवे}. \text{186}
\]

Viraha deepens her love and she suffers extreme misery in Krishna's Viyoga. Gopi is saying that where should she go to search her Lord (Krishna). She does not know where he has gone. She is searching her Lord by abandoning her home and wondering from place to place in search of her lover. She is searching him in forest (Ban), mountains (Dongar) and asking from every (Darum) and Bal but nobody has told her about him:

\[
\text{कैहिं मारग में जाउँ सली री, मारग मोहिं बिसरयौ।}
\text{ना जानौं कित है गए मोहन, जाल न जानि परयौ।।}
\text{अपनी पिय दूँकति फिरीं, मोहिं मिलेबे कौं चाब।}
\text{कौंटो लामी प्रेम को, पिय, यह पायी दाव।।}
\text{बन डोंगर दूँकत फिरी, घर मारग तजि गाउँ।}
\text{बूँभीं द्रम प्रति बेलि कोऊ, कहै न पिय को नाउँ।।} \text{187}
\]

In Guru Granth Sahib also, true wife is shown ready to offer her everything to someone who tells about her Husband (Lord):

\[
\text{बेदी आहिं भिलौँै मेना धीउः भिल।} 
\]

186 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 35.
In *Viraha* all things appear useless. Wife is ready to break her bangles and arms. She is even ready to burn her arms if they do not embrace the Lover:

In *Viraha* all things appear useless. Wife is ready to break her bangles and arms. She is even ready to burn her arms if they do not embrace the Lover:

\[\text{हैं विराहा में सब बातें बिलकुल अक्षम।।}
\[\text{को जा जानता हैं बिहते भें न जानत बिखी जन।।}

Gopis of Braj literature have lost their sense in *Viraha* and are not even able to make difference between conscious and unconscious things:

\[\text{हैं विराहा में सब बातें बिलकुल अक्षम।।}
\[\text{को जा जानता हैं बिखी जन।।}

All natural changes appeared dangerous to her in separation:

\[\text{हैं विराहा में सब बातें बिलकुल अक्षम।।}
\[\text{को जा जानता हैं बिखी जन।।}

Same view is expressed by Kumbhandas:

\[\text{निसि अधियारी दामिनि डरपावति मोकें चमकिं-चमकिं।}
\[\text{हिनु हरि-समिपु भवन भयानकु अकेले, आलिनि लागे}
\[\text{चोंकिं-चोंकिं परें हमकिं-हमकिं।।}

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188 Guru Granth Sahib, Suhi Mahala 4, p. 757.
189 Ibid., Vadbans Mahala 1, pp. 557-58.
190 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, p. 11.
191 Guru Granth Sahib, Tukhari Mahala 1, p. 1108.
The entire *Baramaha* in Guru Granth Sahib depicts month by month the sufferings of the lonely woman, which is metaphorically used for the yearning of individual soul, for union with God against the backdrop of the changing seasons.  

Among *Ashtachhap* writers, Nanddas in his work *Viraha Manjari* also wrote *Baramaha* which mentioned month to month sufferings of *Gopi* with the change of season:

> ढ़ादसमास बिरह की कथा। बिरहिन कों दुःखदायक जया।।

Ultimately that devotion and *Viraha* is responsible for her union with the Lord:

> पै गोपिन के प्रेम अग्र अपने मुख हारे।।
> तब बोले पिय नव किसोर हम ऋणी तिहरे।।

Guru Granth Sahib also mentioned that because of the devotion of wife, Lord decides to come to her:

> मेहर दिल भुख मेंसे भाटिग्य भरु मुखि समस्त जन।।
> बुख नवी दिल भुख भाटिग्य ढेग भजीग्य भरु जन।।

This quality has great importance on spiritual path because without pangs of separation love cannot grow. In this regard G.S. Talib stated that woman’s yearning for union and agony of her separation immediately enters into the soul and stir powerful vibrations there.  

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196 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Bilwal Mahala 4, p. 844.
**Sacrifice:** Such a wife who is totally absorbed in devotion to Lord is ready to sacrifice everything in lieu of Lord. She sacrifices her body, mind and everything:

ना धितु साहेन आधार उन भले भगी घटेन्द्र।

Wife (devotee) is advised to act according to Lord’s will and surrender her body and mind to the Lord:

मये जै सी उले भले भगी भोग भवले लतीने॥

_Gopi of Ashtachhap_ writers also sacrifice her everything body, mind and wealth for the sake of her love to _Shri Krishna_:

लाज सकृत तन मन जोखन सरसु हरि तन दीजे॥

She is ready to offer everything to that person who tells her about her Husband. She is ready to cut off her head to make a seat for that person and to serve him even without head:

ै गरिप्प जी निध ति अण्व यह सच्चा विभक्षीसह।

So, she is ready to sacrifice everything i.e. her home, family, property, her body and mind for the sake of Lord:

कृष्णदास स्वामी कौ प्यारी सरसु देत नेकु नही भटकी॥

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198 _Ibid._, Sri Raga Mahala 3, p. 31.
199 _Ibid._, Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.
200 Krishandas, _Pad-Sangrah_, Pad 154, p. 56.
201 Chhitswami, _Pad-Sangrah_, Pad 144, p. 96.
203 Krishandas, _Pad-Sangrah_, Pad 270, p. 98.
Woman of Guru Granth is ready to surrender her mind, whole body, all her land and even her head to that beloved friend, who brings news of God:-

उड़ी मथा अक्षधे मधु उड़ा भक्तधे अक्षधे मधु रोभे ||
उड़ी मिर्च अक्षधे इतिहासात जिम्बाब्वे में पूर्व रोहित मरेम || 204

About this quality of woman Prof. Puran Singh states, “Her spirit of self sacrifice is real and man is more or less dramatic and unreal”.205

**Removal of Ego:** They considered removal of ego as an essential trait that is required for the union with Almighty God:

उड़ी प्योङ बचे मीगाजु ||
उड़ी लभिह मेंते उड़ि बड़ा || 206

Among Ashtachhap writers Govindswami and Nanddas have explained the necessity of this quality on the spiritual path. Govindswami’s Gopi is saying that after seeing Nandlal her ego has gone:

मान छूट गयो री निरस्त मोहन वदन || 207

Wife of Guru Granth Sahib forgets her identity and fixes her mind on God-Husband after removal of ego:

उड़ी प्योङ बडी बैनवाति उव माणी मुजिछ महती || 208

Nanddas’ Gopi also forget her identity after the removal of ego:

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208 *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sarang Mahala 1, p. 1197.
After removal of ego wife has achieved union with Lord:

उड़िये सादी उर वैंड मनाशी॥ २१०

*Suhagan* knows the worth of her Husband Lord. She renounces ego and enjoys peace and pleasure:-

मह बी माव मुणजानि मगे॥

उसि महिमारु मध उलीमा मगे॥ २११

*Gopi* after removing her ego has achieved *Shri Krishna*:

मान त्यजो री नदलाल सो। २१२

**Fear of God**: Guru Granth Sahib states that along with quality of love, fear of God is also essential on the spiritual path:

बढ़ो तन्त्र से बढ़ वर बचे मीमांसु॥

मह ती मेरे वटे बढ़ा॥ २१३

Woman should adorn herself with fear (*Bhai*) and devotion (*Bhava*) to become a *Suhagan* of God:

दे दीना देवि महमध्या हैटी बढ़ वर वर्ड़ मीमांसु॥

उर मुणजानि सादीमे रुपी ना मंड यरे धिपासु॥ २१४

There is not any mention of this quality among *Ashtachhap* writings.

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210 *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Subhi Mahala* 1, p. 740.
213 *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Asa Mahala* 1, p. 357.
**Patience:** Feminine quality of patience is also necessary in the pursuit of Ultimate Reality:

\[
\text{सीढ़ समभिन धिमत आविष्का भरहैं} ||
\text{हिम राती लड़ि चुध म समझहैं} || 215
\]

That wife, who has this quality, is loved by God-Husband and is called *Suhagan*:

\[
\text{मुझिम मीणाज लभिध वर्द आहैं} ||
\text{उ न्यराजादि म लैँदे छाँहे} || 216
\]

In *Ashtachhap* writings, *Gopi* and *Radha* who are in eager desire to see Lord *Krishna*, advised by the writers to keep patience because without this quality, it is not possible to receive the love of Lord:

\[
\text{देखि मधुर मुसकानि लाल की, कहे न श्रीरज राखहिँ} || 217
\]

**Truthfulness:** Quality of truth is also emphasized. If the wife has the quality of truth then God-Husband never goes away from her.

\[
\text{मछु मेंविध मस्त मस्त ख्यात मस्त खेले धिन छाँहे} ||
\text{लालित विश्विका रा चुध मांसे भागजिड भेंटि समझहैं} || 218
\]

Guru Granth Sahib emphasized that Lord can be achieved only with feminine qualities of truthfulness and patience. 219

**Humility:** Wife (devotee) must be humble and modest before the God-Husband:

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In Braj literature *Gopi* is also depicted having the quality of humility:

हा हा करें और पाँच लाखें सुनहि बीनती मेरी।

Anybody who remains humble like wife achieves the ultimate goal of life:

तेहि उपास्तीका उपासि लिङ्गाः निम्नलिङ्गाः॥

The second line is very important in which Guru Nanak seems to pray to God that he may be given the spiritual touch of woman whose soul has become God's beloved.

Women leaders of the liberation movement, fighting for equality with men at all levels, too, at times, appear to corroborate the idea of humility on the part of women. Simone De Beauvoir, an internationally known French existential philosopher and one of the pioneers of feminist thought in her famous work *The Second Sex*, speaks of this ideal in her chapter on 'The Independent Woman', “Such couples allow undemanding generosity a condition for perfect equity. It may even be then the man acts as a devoted servant, but for the most part is the woman who has to bear the cost of domestic harmony.” Here Simone endorses what Guru Sahib said hundreds

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221 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 171, p. 62.
222 Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Raga Shloka Mahala 1, p. 85.
of years ago.224 Woman protagonist in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, a free being, creates conditions for perfect equality with her qualities of undemanding generosity, humility, love and contentment.225

**Sweetness of Tongue:** It is connected with humility. A devotee, who like wife remains humble and speaks sweet, achieves the Lord:


Gurus advocate the qualities of swetness and humility. These qualities make life worth living at home front and make woman even superior to man as she has these qualities in abundance, more than a man. 227

**Forgiveness:** This is essentially considered as feminine quality especially of mother. Mother always has the capacity to forgive the mistakes of her child. This quality is equally important in the pursuit of the Lord:


Ashtachhap writers have hardly paid attention to this quality.

**Obedient:** Whatever God does should be welcomed and God’s command should be obeyed:


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228 Guru Granth Sahib, Asa Mahala 1, p. 359.

Wife never objected the doings of God-Husband. She obeyed God’s command without objection:

ने ग्रह त्राय मे दल वाः भारी मे ग्रह मां बुध चुरानाहै ||

Gopi of Ashtachhap writers is ready to obey the will of the Lord Krishna:

जो कछू करति सुल-बिलास लेति रसहि मानि ||

Gopi is saying to Shri Krishna that she is prepared to live according to his command and ready to eat what he will provide to her without any objection:

ज्यों तयां राली तयां रट्टे जो देहु सी खाहू ||

Such an obedient Suhagan (Gurmukh) enjoys the company of Lord:

आति तत्त्व अकय अस्थ मेंजाहि अंध भेंदी वचनवि ||

तत्त्व धिभु धारिया जवि मचन मेंजाहि रावि ||

One thing that deserves special mention here is that while femininie qualities are recommended for a woman (devotee) the masculine qualities like chivalry and cleverness have not been overlooked. A woman is not expected to be a spineless creature without having an independent personality of her own. Boldness and chivalry are essential attributes of an ideal woman of Guru Granth Sahib.234 Mai Bhago is an example of it. Even Mata Sundari not only

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230 Ibid., Tilang Mahala 1, p. 722.
231 Krishandas, Pad-Sangrah, Pad 263, p. 95.
232 Ibid., p. 22.
233 Guru Granth Sahib, Suhi Mahala 3, p. 785.
took keen interest in Sikh polity, but also successfully guided the
destiny of the Panth in a crucial time.

Above mentioned hymns authenticate that both ideologes
(Guru Granth Sahib and Braj literature) have considered the feminine
qualities very helpful in the attainment of God. Guru Granth Sahib
considered these feminine qualities as very helpful in the quest and
attainment of Lord. Even Social Scientist today have started
realizing that feminine qualities like patience, humility, love and self-
sacrifice can pave the way for a better social climate. Word famous
Psychologist Dr. H.B. Danesh in his work, 'Violence-Free Family'
states, “But the scales are already shifting-force is losing weight and
mental alertness, intuition and spiritual qualities of love and service,
in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence, the new
age will be less masculine and more permeated with feminine ideals-or
to speak more exactly, will be an age in which masculine and feminine
elements of civilization will be more properly balanced.” Thus Guru
Granth Sahib and Braj literature glorifies the feminine qualities and
enjoins upon all humanity to cultivate these qualities, which in words
of Dr. Danesh, will banish violence from the family and society. So,
Suhagan of Guru Granth Sahib and Gopi of Braj literature is one’s

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guide on the path of spirituality. These ideologies have raised the status of woman by making her the symbol of Divine love.

Here it must be kept in mind that though the content of both ideologies is common but the effect is not quite the same. There is a dichotomy in Ashtachhap writer’s behaviour about the salvation of woman. On one side they define the spiritual path through the voice of Gopi and declare that for salvation there is no difference between man and woman:

भजै जिहि भाव जै, मिलैं हरि ताहि त्यी, भेद भेदा नहीं पुरुष-नारी।

or

प्रीति बस स्याम है राव के रंक कोउ, पुरुष के नारि नहीं भेद कारी।

On the other side, they agreed about the dependent position of woman and her obligation to serve her husband loyally and faithfully without question. Her salvation lies in the service of her husband:

कपाट तज पति करौ पूजा, कहां तुम जिय गुणौ।।
कत मानहु भव तरौगी, और नहीं उपाइ।

She is advised by them to worship and serve her husband who is considered as only source for her salvation.

तज भरतार और जौ भजियै सो कुलीन नहिं होइ।।

or

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Contrary to it Guru Granth’s message maintained that woman and members of lower castes are not in any way barred from attaining salvation.\textsuperscript{242} Its goal of emancipation is equally open to woman as much as to a man.\textsuperscript{243} As on the platter lie arranged three delicacies truth, contentment and contemplation... She/he who eats them, she/he who savours them obtains liberation\textsuperscript{244}:

\begin{quote}
वाला लिड़ि लिड़ि दमक परदी जम्म मेंधु हिंघे॥
भाई भाभ ठलव ला भदीर सिम ला महम भाग्यके॥
से ने धर्म ने से ने बुद्ध ला गौर बैंग्यके॥
\end{quote}

At spiritual level woman has been bestowed with a special status when Gurbani calls her the best of the best:

\begin{quote}
मझ धार्मके भाग्य महमें॥
\end{quote}

\textit{Bhai Gurdas}, the great Sikh scholar says, "of all the Vedas knowledge and all other virtues, it is the woman who can best guide man to the gates of salvation."\textsuperscript{247}

Further \textit{Ashtachhap} writers classified woman into different categories. This classification can be, specifically seen in the works of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{244} Nikky Singh, \textit{The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Guru Granth Sahib}, Mundavani Mahala 5, p. 1429.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{Ibid.}, Asa Mahala 5, p. 371.
\textsuperscript{247} Prabhjot Kaur, "Woman as Gurmat Portrays Her", p. 32.
\end{flushleft}
Surdas\textsuperscript{248}, Nanddas\textsuperscript{249} and Krishandas.\textsuperscript{250} Nanddas in his writing Ras Manjari classified woman into Swakiya, Parakiya and Samayana according to religious ethos. Each of these three further divided into Mugadha, Madhya and Parora. These are further divided into many categories.\textsuperscript{251} On the other side Guru Nanak and his successors have not done this type of classification of woman anywhere in their writings.\textsuperscript{252}

Another difference also interesting to note is that Ashtachhap writers, specifically Surdas, repeated some common prejudices against woman. He compared woman to \textit{Kali Nagini}:

\begin{quote}
भागिनि और \\
भुजगिनि कारी, \textsuperscript{253} इनके बिष्णुं डरैये।
\end{quote}

In another couplet he calls woman worst than \textit{Nagin}:\textsuperscript{254}

\begin{quote}
सुकदेव कप्तौ, \\
सुनी हो राव। \textsuperscript{255} नारी-नागिनि एक सुभाव।।

नागिनि के काटैं बिष होइ। \textsuperscript{255} नारी चितवन नर रहै भोइ।।
\end{quote}

On the other side, the deprecation of woman is totally alien to Guru Granth Sahib. It is said that Guru Arjan rejected the composition of Chhaju as being too derogatory to woman.\textsuperscript{256} In this connection Theodra Foster Carroll rightly says, "Nanak consistently

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{248} Vallabhdas Tiwari, \textit{Hindi Kavya Ma Nari}, pp. 357 to 60.
\item\textsuperscript{249} Nanddas, \textit{Nanddas Granthawali}, p. 96.
\item\textsuperscript{250} Dr. Hargulal, \textit{Ashtachhap Ka Kavi Krishandas}, pp. 42-43.
\item\textsuperscript{251} Nanddas, \textit{Nanddas Granthwali}, p. 96.
\item\textsuperscript{252} Kiranjeet, \textit{Guru Nanak Di Bani Vich Istari Da Sankalap}, p. 33.
\item\textsuperscript{254} Shyam Bala Goyal, \textit{Bhakti Kaleen Ram Aur Krishan Kavya Ki Nari Bhavana : A Comparative Study}, Vibhu Prakashan, Sahibabad, 1976, p. 128.
\item\textsuperscript{255} Surdas, \textit{Sursagar}, Pad 9/446, Vol. I, p. 149.
\item\textsuperscript{256} C.H. Loehlin, \textit{The Sikhs and Their Scriptures}, Publishing House, Lucknow, 1964, p. 32.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
praised women, denounced their oppression, strongly rejected
suggestions made by his followers that women were evil or unworthy
and refused to make additions to the Adi Granth that would have
reviled women.”

In Ashtachhap writings, one may note some signs of eroticism.
At some places their descriptions become erotic especially of Nanddas
in his Roop Manjar:

Contrary to this Guru Granth Sahib does not have any
description of this type. It refutes and rejects this view by declaring
that uncontrolled passions are gateway to sorrow and disease. And

257 Theodra Foster Carroll, Women, Religion and Development in the Third World, New York,
258 Krishandeia Jhari, Ashtachhap Aur Nanddas, pp. 103-104.
259 Nanddas, Nanddas Granthawali, pp. 124-25.
the end product of servility to senses is invariably sickness and trouble:

\[ \text{ॐ ब्रह्म भावमग्नीभा दुष्कृष्ण मृत्यु मंगलाः} \] \text{॥}^{260}

Noticing these differences, one must agree with J.S. Grewal that Guru Nanak created a larger space for woman, perhaps in the whole range of Indian literature springing from devotional theism.\textsuperscript{261}

Spiritual philosophy of both ideologies about woman is equally relevant in social sphere which will be discussed in the next chapter.

\begin{flushleft}
\text{260 Guru Granth Sahib, Maru Mahala 1, p. 1008.}
\text{261 J.S. Grewal, "A Gender Perspective on Guru Nanak", ed., Kiran Pawar, Women in Indian History, p. 157.}
\end{flushleft}