

THE WORKING OF THE MOVEMENT

It is important to see how this movement started by Guru Nanak in his Divine Vision worked, progressed and succeeded; how the seed that Guru Nanak sowed, sprouted, foliated, blossomed and bore fruit. Guru Nanak was the great architect who laid out the master plan in every meticulous detail, which his eight successors implemented and developed, and the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, finally brought to perfection.

Born in 1469 A.D., Guru Nanak spent almost 27 years of his life in observing, studying, and gauging the ailments inflicting the whole mankind, and thinking out the remedial solutions. At that time two cultures, the Aryan and the Semitic, were warring with each other for supremacy in India. With a view to reconciling the two warring communities into one brotherhood he raised the slogan, "there is no Hindu and no Mussalman", meaning thereby that they had both fallen from their high ideals and had forgotten God, their common Father. It also meant that they were all the beloved sons and daughters of one Supreme Creator and that it was wrong and sinful to put them into separate categories that quarrelled with each other. And it also meant that they were all equal though they believed in different schools of thought. He, thus, established the base for the principle of Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. His way of propagating his mission and spreading the Movement was through dramatic transformations and spectacular conversions. During his main four tours to spread the Light, he visited the snowclad Kailash Parvat and Tibet in the North, the Far-East, Ceylon in the South, and Mecca, reaching the Red Sea

and the Mediterranean in the West. The Sikh missionary centres were established and set in motion by Guru Nanak for development of his mission. He put Raja Shiv Nab, the ruler of Ceylon to propagate Sikhism in Ceylon; Bhai Lalo, an artisan at Saidpur in Northern Punjab; Kauda, the renowned cannibal, better known as Kauda Raksha, was turned into a missionary and put in charge of the organization in central India; while Sajjan, who was a great thug and killer dreaded in Western Punjab, was in charge of his missionary work at Tulamba near Multan. In the Middle East, Shah Bahlol was put in charge at Baghdad. He got hold of individuals with virile personalities, bubbling energy, original independent vision, and with influence and fame in the *Ilaqa*, irrespective of whether good or bad, and washing their brain of old filth, completely remoulded, transformed them and directed them on to the right path. Thus, their latent virtues were energized by the touch of the Super Mind of the Master. The talent and strength that was misdirected or being frittered away, was controlled, marshalled, channelized and put on the useful, noble, and purposeful path of service and good for humanity. This gave the Movement a forceful start. We find *sangats* coming to have *darshan* of Satguru from Kabul and Qandhar during the time of the fifth Nanak, and during the time of the sixth Guru, bringing offerings of Persian, Iraqi and Arabian horses. And so was the case during the tenth Nanak's time. This shows that all those centres worked as dynamic and living organizations, although the later Gurus did not personally visit those far flung areas.

As a master architect, the Guru knew that an edifice can stand the ravages of the changing times, and maintain its freshness and usefulness only if it is constructed on sound and solid foundation. The edifice of such a society, that the Guru envisaged, could only be founded on the basis of the right sort of individuals who were such consecrated men of God. In the ultimate analysis of the outcome of any physical, political, mental or spiritual conflict or war, the character, attitude, spirit, outlook and forging of values in the individual "man" involved, come to the fore. It is the human being, the individual, with conviction and clarity of purpose in

mind, who comes out victorious.

The Master Architect also knew that any imposition from outside would provoke reaction and result in an uncalled for resistance and heartburning. To force a reform, howsoever much desirable, by order or legislation, is not generally conducive to happiness or general satisfaction. If the attitude of the mind is changed and instead of imposition from without, it becomes an urge from within and a willing and voluntary act, it always provides joy and good feeling. It becomes fulfilment of duty and, therefore, pleasure to the mind. Like collection of money, when imposed from outside, is much resented tax, but when urged from within, it is contribution in fulfilment of one's *dharam*. Forces marching under orders from above are more or less mercenary legions or plundering adventurers, while those who volunteer under the urge of their *dharam* are crusaders, and in the higher sphere of life it is *Akal Purkh Ki Fauj*. People otherwise hesitate to lift dirty utensils and carry mud, but they get cheerful satisfaction and spiritual elation when they cleanse the utensils of the *langar* and vie with each other to carry mud on their heads as was observed at the *karsewa* of the *Amrit Sarowar* at Amritsar and at Fatehgarh Sahib. In almost every case, thus, these two sides of the matter exist and they make all the difference.

Guru Nanak, therefore, got hold of the basic situation. Rather than starting straight away a sect of militant revolutionaries who may not have known the values they would be fighting for, and who would have responded only to fiery slogans and fanatic fervour, he got down to basic resurrection of the spirit of man which had degenerated and decayed to non-entity under centuries of subjugation and exploitation by the priest class (Pandit, Mullah and all) in the name of the church, and by the state, with the ruler coming to be considered a representative of the Divinity, and by the monied class and higher castes. All camouflaged their exactions in the name of God to perpetuate their hold. He undertook first to build the character of man and awaken and free his spirit. By teaching the essential doctrine of *Naam*, he provided the mainstay to the human soul and spirit.

To bring about this resurrection, and regeneration of the individual, and development of his character, Satguru provided the individual first with an anchor. By bringing man into the discipline, i.e., fear of the Fearless One, he, thus, emancipated him from all other fears : the fear of the priest, the fear of the high class, the fear of the state, the fear of the ruler, the mental fear created by superstition and institutionalized formalism and ritualism of religion, and above all the fear of death itself. The fourth Guru, in *Rag Asa*, says :

They who meditate on the Fearless Lord, all their fears vanish.

ਜਿਨ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਜਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਜੀ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਭਉ ਸਭੁ ਗਵਾਸੀ ॥

Again the fifth Guru, in *Rag Gauri*, says :

With the Fearless One dwelling with thee; where do you get the fear from ?

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੈ ਬਸਤੇ ਇਹੁ ਡਰਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਇਆ ॥

To bring about this resurrection of the individual, it took the Satguru five generations of society. He started from the lowest step and closest area with an opening for expansion further out.

With this end in view, literacy was given great importance. The recording of the *bani* was started by the first Satguru himself. He popularised Punjabi in Gurmukhi script to bring this about. The second Nanak propagated and spread literacy amongst the Sikhs. During the period of the third Nanak, the *bani* was properly recorded in different volumes which are now safeguarded at different places to this day. I had an occasion and good luck to see one of these volumes at Patiala after partition of the Punjab in 1947 with a friend from the Frontier Province through the good offices of Baba Prem Singh of Hoti Mardan. The other one is said to be at village Ahyapur in the district of Hoshiarpur. The fifth Satguru eventually sat down at Ramsar, the beautiful solitary spot in Amritsar, and composed and compiled the Holy Granth. Eventually, in 1690, the tenth Guru announced that no one amongst his Sikhs had remained unlettered. Every Sikh, young and old, had become literate. This claim was upheld by the fact that when in 1699, the Satguru created the Order of the Khalsa, the Sikhs

who were initiated, kept spreading out, forming parties of five 'Beloved ones' to continue the initiation further. This chain continued until as many as 80,000 Sikhs were initiated into the Order of the Khalsa on one occasion. We know that this initiation can be done only by reciting the five *bani*s (compositions of the Satguru). There were no printing presses working in the country then, so that copies could be distributed to every one to help recite the *bani*s. Handwritten copies could only be very few. Even these could be made use of only by those who could read. It is obvious, therefore, that every Sikh at that time was not only literate but also was fully conversant with *Gurbani* and remembered by heart all the *bani*s comprising the morning, evening and night prayers, in which the 'Initiation' *bani*s are distributed for every day recital. This was necessary as the Satguru knew that God-consciousness could be brought about only through education, understanding, knowledge and culture.

To bring about fraternity and equality, the Satguru founded two very important institutions of Sikhism, *sangat* and *pangat*. *Sangat* means a gathering in the presence of the Guru for community worship and deliberations for the general welfare. *Pangat* pertains to community kitchen, the *langar*, where every one sits down to dine in a line irrespective of caste or class. This by itself struck at the root of *Varnashram Dharma*, the mainstay of the Hindus.

When this spiritual re-awakening and regeneration of individual 'man' and resurrection of human values and restoration of consciousness of the self, and mental, moral and social uplift was complete, the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun Dev, announced in *Sri Rag* :

I have built up the Abode of Truth.

ਮੈ ਬਧੀ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੈ ॥

And gathered in it the Guru's Sikhs after great search.

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਲਹਦਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਕੈ ॥

The Merciful Lord hath now given the Command,

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣੁ ਦਾ ॥

That no one will henceforth domineer over and give pain to another.

ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥

And, all will abide in peace; such being the Rule of Merciful Lord.

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

I am the combatant of God's own legion (*Akal Purkh's Fauj*).

ਹਉ ਗੋਸਾਈ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ ॥

On meeting the Guru, the plume of my *sarband* flutters high up.

ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਉਚ ਦੁਮਾਲੜਾ ॥

The spectators hath assembled in the arena to witness my deeds of valour; the Creator Himself witnesseth (the struggle)

ਸਭ ਹੋਈ ਛਿੰੜ ਇਕਠੀਆ ਦਯੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਆਪਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

Guru Nanak Dev had raised his voice against tyranny, high-handedness and bloodshed at Emnabad during Babar's invasion of India and courted arrest. Now the fifth Nanak laid down his life for the protection of the 'Values' and 'Virtues' established. The pinnacle of this movement was reached on the burning '*Jeth*' *Sudi* 4th (May 30th, 1606) when at Lahore he offered *shahadat* (martyrdom), death by *yasa*. Amongst the Mughals (Mongols-Mughals), there was a rule, influenced by fear, that if blood is spilt of a man of God, it brings down Divine calamity. So when killing such a person they adopted such means that blood may not be spilled. This rule of theirs was called *yasa*.

Thus, the fifth Satguru set the unique example of perfect non-violence by offering martyrdom. But at the same time, he made it clear that surrendering life as *ahuti* (ਅਹੁਤੀ) and tactic, when not successful, should not mean surrendering values helplessly. So long as life breathes, effort and struggle must continue. When other means have failed, it is ethically and morally justified (ਹਲਾਲ) and even incumbent on a Sikh to resort to force. We find, therefore, that he infused in his successor, the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, this outlook, and prepared him in a manner that on the first moment of his accession, at the age of 11, he asked for the sword; again not for one but two swords. It was an evaluation of the symbol. The

swords of *miri* and *piri* representing worldly and spiritual suzerainty were separately worn by the sixth Guru. The final perfected form of this principle was created by the Satguru in his tenth form, when in his hand the two swords merged into one double-edged sword called *khandā*. In the same way, the ninth Nanak, Guru Teg Bahadur, while sacrificing his head for the freedom to practise and have belief in one's chosen faith, prepared his son and successor, the tenth Satguru, for the same purpose. The tenth Guru at the time of his accession was only nine years old. He says in his own words that he was given training in all and various ways and kinds (ਦੀਨੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਭਾਂਤ ਕੀ ਸਿਫ਼ਾ) :

Guru Nanak had said :

To follow His Will cheerfully,

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ

And in his fifth form the Guru exemplified it by cheerfully offering *shahadat*. When Mian Mir, the great Sufi Saint, offered to intervene, he was stopped by the Guru and told to abide cheerfully by the Divine Will. Thus, the acceptance and practice of living in *Hukm* was complete. The words of the fifth Master, in *Rag Maru*, are significant and enlightening:

Lo, the servant of God loveth Him to the end.

ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਉੜਕਿ ਨਿਬਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥

In his lifetime he serveth his Master, and while quitting the world, he mindeth only Him, and Him alone.

ਜੀਵਤ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਅਪਨਾ ਚਲਤੇ ਰਾਖਿਓ ਚੀਤਿ ॥

Whatever is the Lord's Command, on that he turneth not his back.

ਜੈਸੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਕੀਨੀ ਠਾਕਰਿ ਤਿਸਤੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮੋਰਿਓ ॥

And whether sheltered at home or driven out of its refuge, he remaineth in peace and utter calm.

ਸਹਜੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਰਖਿਓ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਉਠਿ ਉਆਹੁ ਕਉ ਦਉਰਿਓ ॥

He accepteth privation with joy when such is the Lord's Will, and knoweth not pleasure or pain.

ਆਗਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਭੂਖ ਸੋਈ ਕਰਿ ਸੁਖਾ ਸੋਗ ਹਰਖ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਿਓ ॥

And whatever cometh from God that he accepteth with a cheerful heart.

ਜੋ ਜੋ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਭਇਓ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਾ ਸੋ ਮਾਥੈ ਲੇ ਮਾਨਿਓ ॥

The Master is merciful to the servant and his life here and hereafter is approved.

ਭਇਓ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲੁ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਸਵਰੇ ਹਲਤ ਪਲਾਤਾ ॥

O, Blessed and successful is the servant of God unto whom the Lord is revealed.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਸਫਲੁ ਓਹੁ ਆਇਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਤਾ ॥

During the period of the third Nanak, Guru Amar Das, the missionary work was divided into 22 dioceses called *manjees*, which during the fifth Satguru's time came to be known as *masands*, who spread the Word and the teachings of the Satguru and collected the tithe for the Central Court of the Guru. This system was abolished by the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, when the Khalsa came to its own and the Guru became the Sikh and the Sikh the Guru. Then every member of the brotherhood worked as an institution complete in himself.