

*Socio-Religious Movements and Cultural Networks
in Indian Civilization*

OCCASIONAL PAPER 2

Guru Nanak and Patriarchy

J.S. GREWAL

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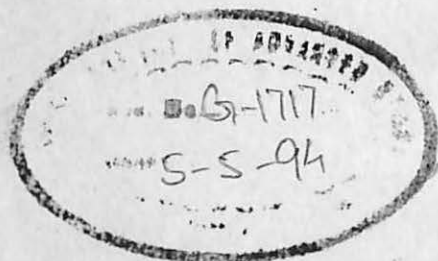
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PREFACE

The project on 'Socio-Religious Movements and Cultural Networks in Indian Civilization' was formulated by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in 1991-92 as a part of the celebration of its silver jubilee. The basic purpose of this project is to study religious movements, cultural centres and interpretations of sacred texts, which have influenced, and still influence, millions of people in the Indian subcontinent. The scholars associated with the project seek to explore the sociological as well as the ideological dimensions of the subjects of their study. Through these studies we hope to create a substantial corpus of humanistic literature dealing with the social and cultural history of Indian civilization. As a spin off, this literature would throw light on the contemporary scene.

Over a score of scholars working on the project are expected to complete their monographs by the end of 1995. A comprehensive bibliography is being prepared for publication at the same time as the monographs. A volume containing an overview of the main theme of the project would also be published. Two seminars with direct bearing on the theme will be held in 1993 and 1994, in addition to the seminars normally organized by the Institute every year. The proceedings of these seminars too will be published. The scholars working on the project meet periodically to discuss the progress of their work and the papers they prepare in connection with the project. Six of these 'occasional papers' were finalized in 1992. They are now all published.

Guru Nanak's attitude towards patriarchy, with its implications for the gender relationship, has been discussed in this essay on the basis entirely of his own compositions in the Adi Granth. Though a number of writers have referred to Guru Nanak's liberal attitude towards women, quite a few of them asserting that he stood for their complete equality with men, the subject has not been explored in any depth. I can think of a brief

discussion of this question in my own book, *Guru Nanak in History*, which was published first in 1969. But the argument in the present essay is much more detailed. Being the first serious attempt to grapple with the problem, it can serve as the basis for further discussion.

April 30, 1993.
Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla.

J.S. GREWAL

GURU NANAK AND PATRIARCHY

Guru Nanak's emphasis on the unity of God is well known. Many a scholar has underlined also the transcendence and the immanence of his God. What is generally not appreciated is that these two aspects are not opposed to each other. They are the reverse and the obverse of the same conceptual coin. Guru Nanak's God is *nirgun* and *sagun* at one and the same time. Before the creation of the universe and the beginning of time, God exists in a void (*sun mandal*), and nothing can be attributed to him. In this state, he is without any sign (*niranjan*); he is neither female (*nār*) nor male (*purkh*).¹

However, God manifested himself through his creation, acquired attributes in his *sagun* state, and he can be known to the extent that he has revealed himself. As in every thing in the universe, he is in all living beings.² Guru Nanak underlines God's immanence as much as his transcendence in several ways. For example, he who created the vessels (*bhānday*) placed the same light (*jit*) in all of them.³ His light is in every heart (*ghat*).⁴ The light that shines in all is his light.⁵ Guru Nanak is quite explicit that God created both 'man and woman'.⁶ His light is in both 'man and woman'.⁷ The human body is the abode (*mahal, mandar, ghar*) of God (Har), and in this body is placed the light.⁸ When this light mingles with the primal light, one attains emancipation, or liberation. No

¹ *Adi Granth*, Rag Dhanasari (Ashtpadian), 685. The printed *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, abbreviated hereafter as A.G., has a standard pagination.

² A.G. Rag Gauri, 228.

³ A.G. Sri Rag, 62. The idea of God's light being everywhere is expressed at several other places too, as in A.G. Rag Ramkali, 876.

⁴ A.G. Sri Rag, 19.

⁵ A.G. Rag Dhanasari, 663.

⁶ A.G. Rag Vadhans Dakhani, 580.

⁷ A.G. Rag Gauri, 223.

⁸ A.G. Rag Malar, 1255.

distinction is made by Guru Nanak between the male and the female body in this context. Quite explicitly, God has female *sevaks* as well as male *sevaks*.⁹ He bestows his best gifts on all, irrespective of their sex.¹⁰ Since liberation from the chain of re-birth and death was the highest purpose of human life in the eyes of Guru Nanak, the path to liberation was meant to be open to women as much as to men.

Guru Nanak's conception of *māyā*, like his conception of God, is relevant for our present purpose. The whole universe is God's *māyā*.¹¹ In contrast with the eternal existence of God, the universe he created is impermanent. What is eternal is true; what is impermanent is false. The opposition between truth and falsehood, between God and his *māyā*, is basic to the thought of Guru Nanak. This opposition is always assumed, and it is clearly posed at many places in his compositions. For example:¹²

False is the king, false are the subjects; false indeed is the whole universe. False is the palace, false is the mansion, and false are they who dwell in them. False is gold, false is silver, and false are they who wear them. False is the body, false are the garments, and false is the beauty of the highest order. False is the husband and false is the wife; they are wasted away at last. The false love the false; they forget the creator. With whom should one seek friendship when all are bound to depart? False are sweets and false is honey; through falsehood has drowned the whole boat-load. There is nothing but falsehood without you, O Lord, says Nanak.

Anything other than God is *māyā*; it is the 'other play' (*dūja khel*).¹³ It is 'deceit' (*dhoh*), but its pleasures are intoxicating to the point of making one oblivious of death.¹⁴ *Māyā*, thus, becomes poison (*bikht*).¹⁵ Affiliation to *māyā* keeps one attached to falsehood, and attachment

⁹ A.G. Rag Ramkali, 879.

¹⁰ A.G. Jap, 2.

¹¹ A.G. Rag Asa, 351.

¹² A.G. Rag Asa (Slok), 468.

¹³ A.G. Sri Rag, 72.

¹⁴ A.G. Sri Rag, 15.

¹⁵ A.G. Rag Suhi (Chaupaday), 728.

keeps one chained to the cycle of death-and-rebirth.¹⁶ *Māyā* is comparable to the attendant in a temple; any one who remains attached to the attendant never reaches the Lord.¹⁷ This world is the abode of falsehood; one should seek the true abode by adoring the 'true one' and thereby appropriating 'the truth'.¹⁸

Ordinarily, however, men and women remain attached to things which belong to the realm of *māyā* 'There is pleasure in gold, pleasure in silver, pleasure in women, pleasure in scents, pleasure in horses, pleasure in the conjugal bed, pleasure in sweets, pleasure in the flesh - there are so many pleasures of the body that there is no room for the name'.¹⁹ Among the things which induce men to forget God are pearls, diamonds, thrones, armies, power and beautiful women.²⁰ Another way of referring to the objects of attachment is to refer to things which are left behind after death: forts, palaces, mansions, elephants, caparisoned horses, large armies, gold, silver, sons, conjugal bed, scents, garments, beauty, ornaments and social status.²¹ Among the objects of attachment in these verses are 'women', 'beautiful women' and 'conjugal bed'. Obviously, they are the source of attraction for males and, quite logically, the woman becomes a part of *māyā*.

Indeed, there are several other verses in which the woman is the object of attraction for males as a part of *māyā*. The 'housewife' is bracketed with sons, relations, wealth and youth. Like avarice, greed and pride, they keep men attached to *māyā* which is compared with the herb which the thugs use to induce unconsciousness in their victims.²² The beautiful women are bracketed with clarified butter (ghee), sugar and fruits.²³ Elsewhere Guru Nanak brackets the woman with sons, gold, horses and

¹⁶ A.G. Rag Majh (Ashtpadian), 109.

¹⁷ A.G. Rag Gauri (Ashtpadian), 229.

¹⁸ A.G. Rag Vadhans, 581.

¹⁹ A.G. Sri Rag, 15.

²⁰ A.G. Sri Rag, 14.

²¹ A.G. Sri Rag, 14.

²² A.G. Sri Rag, 51.

²³ A.G. Sri Rag (Slok), 142.

elephants as the objects of attachment.²⁴ The more popular pair of 'gold and women' also figures in a verse in which the wife too is mentioned together with the son, the daughter, the mother and the father.²⁵ The five patent thugs are power (*rāj*), wealth (*māl*), caste (*jāt*), youth (*joban*) and beauty (*rīp*), and there is a close link between beauty and sexual desire.²⁶ The fascination of beautiful women is mentioned also in a verse in which the great importance of remembering the name of the Lord is emphasized.²⁷

There are some other verses, however, in which the woman figures as the dupe of *māyā* rather than as its part. There is the woman of the ruling class, for instance, in one of the Babur-Bani verses, who suffers because of her indulgence in a life of luxury, including the enjoyment of her conjugal bed, to the point of forgetting God. Some Hindu women too suffer because of their indifference to God.²⁸ It is interesting to note that they are the counterpart of men who suffer a similar fate for the same reason, including the enjoyment of beautiful women 'whose sight banished sleep'.²⁹ The son is an object of attachment for the mother as much as for the father.³⁰ The husband too is an object of attachment for the woman.³¹ The woman longs to look beautiful, to enjoy sensual pleasures, and to collect gold and silver.³² The unregenerate woman appears in these verses to be the counterpart of the male *manmukh*. Indeed, Guru Nanak uses the term *manmukh* for the woman too. Such a woman finds no place anywhere. Without the instruction of the *guru*, she remains blind. She has been duped by *māyā*. 'Lost in delusion, she is the *dohāgan* who never unites with the beloved

²⁴ A.G. Rag Gauri Guareri, 222.

²⁵ A.G. Rag Asa, 416.

²⁶ A.G. Rag Sarag (Slok), 1288.

²⁷ A.G. Sri Rag, 14.

²⁸ A.G. Rag Asa (Ashtpadian), 417. Also Appendix, Extract VII.

²⁹ Appendix, Extract VIII.

³⁰ A.G. Rag Sorath (Chautukay), 596.

³¹ A.G. Sri Rag, 23.

³² A.G. Rag Basant (Ashtapadian Dotukian), 1187; Rag Gauri Cheti,

spouse'.³³

Nevertheless, Guru Nanak defends the female sex in some of his verses against what he regards as Brahmanical superstition. The best of these verses is the one in which he underlines the indispensability of the woman for continuing the human race:³⁴

We are conceived in the woman's womb and we grow in it. We are engaged to women and we wed them. Through the woman's cooperation new generations are born. If one woman dies, we seek another; without the woman there can be no bond. Why call her bad who gives birth to *rājas*? The woman herself is born of the woman, and none comes into this world without the woman; Nanak, the true one alone is independent of the woman.

The longish stanza on the pandit's prejudice against the use of flesh (*mās*) can be taken in a light favourable to women.³⁵ There is no ambiguity about Guru Nanak's sympathy with the woman in the verses which relate to *sūtak*, the notion of impurity attached to the woman who delivers a child. Strictly speaking, there is 'impurity' in the cow-dung, in fire-wood, in grains, and in water itself. How can we observe ritual purity in such a situation? Actually, the impurity of the mind is greed; the impurity of the tongue is false speech; the impurity of the eye is to look at another's woman with lust; the impurity of the ear is to listen to slander. The notion of impurity is a delusion :it amounts to believing in something other than God. Through his order are we born and through his order do we die. Whatever is bestowed by him is pure. They who understand this do not observe *sūtak*.³⁶ It is not surprising that Guru Nanak feels deeply anguished over the rape of women in one of the Babur-Bani verses in which the army of Babur is referred to as the marriage-party of sin (*pāp*) and the 'ceremony of marriage', that is rape, is performed not by the Brahman or the Qazi but by Satan.³⁷

The total absence of misogyny in the compositions of

³³ A.G. Sri Rag (Ashtpadian), 60.

³⁴ A.G. Rag Asa, 473.

³⁵ A.G. Rag Malar (Slok), 472.

³⁶ A.G. Rag Asa (Slok), 472.

³⁷ A.G. Rag Tilang, 722.

Guru Nanak appears to be due in part to his acceptance and advocacy of social commitment which precludes renunciation and asceticism. He denounces the *jogis* more frequently than any other set of people. Among many other things, he disapproves of the *jogī's* renunciation and his preoccupation with celibacy involving the ideal of subduing sexual desire.³⁸ In one of his verses Guru Nanak makes his preference for the house-holding devotee (*grihi sevak*) abundantly clear over the *jogi*, the *bhogī*, the *kāparī*, the *pandit*, the *pādhā*, the *josī*, the *tapsī*, and the *jatī*.³⁹ The path of emancipation does not lie in asceticism and renunciation, or in ritual of any kind; it lies in loving devotion as conceived by Guru Nanak. Thus the opportunity to follow this path is created in the home itself as much for woman as for man.

II

The purpose of life for the woman, as for the man, is to attain liberation from the cycle of death and re-birth, to enjoy the bliss of union with the eternal Lord. The woman with spotless white garments, sweet speech, sharp nose and beautiful black eyes is asked if she has ever seen the master.⁴⁰ Seeing the Lord is what matters. The woman with fascinating eyes, who has adorned herself with all the sixteen items of *singār*, and who is extremely attractive, is told that she is bound to be jilted every day if she does not devote herself to the Lord (*Jagdis*).⁴¹ The spouse (*sauh*) is in the heart of every woman as he is in the heart of every man: the *sohāgans* are they who see the spouse by turning to the *guru*.⁴² Thus, there are male and female *gurmukhs* just as there are male and female *manmukhs*. The joyous Lord enjoys the *sohāgans* every day, and sad is the plight of those who are not enjoyed by him.⁴³ They who accept the Lord's will, the word (*sabd*) is lodged in their

³⁸ A.G. Rag Suhi, 730; Rag Parbhathi, 1329 & 1332.

³⁹ A.G. Rag Asa, 418.

⁴⁰ A.G. Rag Malar, 1257.

⁴¹ A.G. Rag Gauri, 225.

⁴² A.G. Slok, Vārān te Vadhik, 1412.

⁴³ A.G. Sri Rag, 23.

hearts. They who love the spouse are *sohāgans*. He looks at them with grace and unites them with himself. And who are *dohāgans*? They who are separated from the spouse (*khasm*) and wander in a helpless state; dirty are their garments, and they pass the night in pain.⁴⁴

The state of separation resulting from forgetfulness of the Lord is painful: 'If I forget my Lord I die of pain'. That is why the woman should remember him with every morsel and every breath she takes; she should search for him; on seeing him through the name, she would become a *bairāgan* for ever.⁴⁵ If a woman adorns herself without the beloved spouse (*piriā*), her body becomes hot and it cannot bear even the dress. She cannot live without her love even for a moment, and she cannot sleep without meeting him. He is near, but she does not know; the true *guru* shows him to her. She attains peace in *sahaj* and the word quenches her thirst.⁴⁶ As the arena of union and separation, human life is an opportunity for men and women to attain liberation. Therefore, they who are not enjoyed by the spouse (*kant*) remain regretful; dejection and dismay is visible on their faces when the night is past. No woman should miss the opportunity, so that she does not experience regret. Otherwise, she will have to wait for her turn to meet her love in another life.⁴⁷

The opportunity for union is not un-related to merit. The *sohāgans* who have reached the spouse are superior to the woman who does not possess merit; she has no one but herself to blame for this. If she were to go to the *sohāgans* and implore them to tell her how to reach the spouse, they would tell her that she should recognize his will (*hukam*), adorn herself with the fear (*bhau*) of the Lord, and cultivate virtue as the charm to gain access to him.⁴⁸ Every woman, like every man, receives the same precious thing (*vath*) from the Lord (*sauhray*), but differences arise in their lives on the earth (*piukaray*). She who is ill-

⁴⁴ A.G. Sri Rag (Ashtpadian), 73.

⁴⁵ A.G. Rag Bilawal, 796.

⁴⁶ A.G. Rag Tilang, 724.

⁴⁷ A.G. Rag Tilang, 724.

⁴⁸ A.G. Rag Tilang, 725.

cultured (*kuchajī*) does not know how to preserve the gift. The good wife knows how to embroider the cloth for her skirt and she knows how to manage the house; she does not indulge in superfluities, and she is loved by the spouse.⁴⁹ The metaphor of God as the spouse creates the possibility of his having innumerable brides. There are verses of Guru Nanak in which one woman invites others to come together and cultivate those virtues which please the spouse so that he may enjoy them all.⁵⁰ The contextual references to the abundance of wives and women in an affluent house indicate the prevalence of polygamy in contemporary society, and Guru Nanak was obviously aware of this situation.⁵¹ The metaphor remains close to the social reality in which a number of females were attached, institutionally as well as emotionally, to a single male.

However, the metaphor is seldom sustained. To illustrate this point we may turn to a longish stanza which opens with the idea that all women are the brides of the same spouse and adorn themselves to please him. It is useless to flaunt the red dress if the bride lacks dedication. Love is not enjoyed by fraud; the imposter is exposed. When the spouse is kind to a woman, he enables her to adorn herself with virtue and then he enjoys her. She is adorned with the *guru's* word, and her body and mind are dedicated to the spouse. She offers sincere prayers in utter humility. She is imbued with the love of the Lord and the fear of the Lord, and she is imbued with truth. She recognizes the Lord's name, and she becomes his slave. True love never ceases and the true one unites such a woman with himself. The woman who is united by the true *guru* is never widowed. Enjoyed by the beloved spouse, her body remains fresh and she never dies. Through his grace he enjoys the *soḥāgan* every day. Her capital is the truth, and her *singār* is love; the fragrance she uses is the Lord lodged in her mind, and the temple in which she worships is the highest state of conscious-

⁴⁹ A.G. Rag Basant, 1171.

⁵⁰ A.G. Rag Basant, 1170.

⁵¹ A.G. Slok, *Vārān te Vadhik*, 1412.

ness (*daswa duār*). With the name of the Lord lodged within her, she blossoms with the light of the word. Her inside is beautiful and the jewel of love adorns her forehead. She loves the true one and her consciousness is made beautiful by the praises she sings. She does not know anyone other than the true one, and cherishes loving devotion for the *guru*. The ignorant woman who is indifferent to the beloved spouse finds it hard to pass the night. Her body, her mind, her limbs and her riches are singed; her youth is wasted if the spouse has not enjoyed her. She is in the bridal bed with the spouse, but she does not know. She is asleep while the spouse is wide awake. She who is united by the true *guru* subsists in fear and enjoys the peace of love.⁵²

Most of the images and similes used in this stanza relate to situations connected with domestic life. In another verse, the father-in-law and the mother-in-law symbolize manual labour and consciousness; the wife herself is compared to life devoted to good works; the auspicious time of marriage (*sāhā*) is union (*sanjog*); the marriage itself becomes detachment from the world; the progeny from such a union is truth. This is presented as the true path.⁵³ The house of the in-laws is generally a metaphor for the life hereafter (*parlok*) while the natal home is life on the earth (*lok*). That is why if the young woman is imbued with the word in her natal home she is loved by the spouse in her marital home.⁵⁴ In another situation, the young woman is so intoxicated with the wine of youth as to forget that she is no more than a guest in the home of her parents.⁵⁵ Occasionally, Guru Nanak can refer to the situation in which the husband feels estranged from the wife; the sons become the means of their reconciliation.⁵⁶ Procreation is so vital to domesticity that Guru Nanak can ask at one place 'what is a home to a

⁵² A.G. Sri Rag (Ashtpadian), 54-55.

⁵³ A.G. Rag Gauri, 151-52.

⁵⁴ A.G. Rag Tukhari, 1111.

⁵⁵ A.G. Rag Suhi (Chhant), 763-64.

⁵⁶ Gopal Singh, tr., *Guru Granth Sahib*, vols. 1-4, Delhi: Guru Das Kapur and Sons, 1960-62, 134.

eunuch'?⁵⁷

Metaphorically, the death of a woman becomes her 'marriage'. The implication is that she can meet the eternal spouse now. The auspicious time (*sāhā*) is fixed, and she can ask her friends to come and perform the ceremony of putting oil on her head and sing their good wishes so that she is united with her master. She is not alone, for the message from the master comes to every home, and one should look forward to the message.⁵⁸ Indeed, one's whole life should be a preparation for death. To attach oneself to God, to discern the path that leads to him, to realize that he who gives life can take it away, to understand that whatever happens is due to his will, to accept what he decrees, to appropriate the true name – this is the way to prepare for death.⁵⁹ There is no point in wailing for 'the colourful friend who has gone to the wilderness to sleep for ever'. The woman who does this does not know that she herself will not stay for ever in the 'parental home'; she has to leave for her 'in-laws' sooner or later. She should use her life as a rare opportunity to earn merit.⁶⁰

Guru Nanak refers to women in some other situations too. For example, there is the mother whose children attain liberation; she is a blessed woman.⁶¹ The state of widowhood, by contrast, is a curse. Thirst is not quenched without the beloved spouse; the widow feels helpless against sexual urge, or she is in need of money; she gives her body to a stranger.⁶² This is hardly complimentary to the widow, but it is a contextual statement. In another contextual statement, the falsehood of the false comes to them as naturally as the menses to a woman.⁶³ Guru Nanak also refers to men as 'wailing like women' with the obvious implication that it does not behave them.⁶⁴ However, such statements are rather rare. We have to

⁵⁷ Gopal Singh, 134.

⁵⁸ A.G. Rag Gauri, 157.

⁵⁹ A.G. Rag Vadhans, 579.

⁶⁰ A.G. Sri Rag, 23.

⁶¹ A.G. Rag Malar, 1257.

⁶² A.G. Rag Gauri, 225-26.

⁶³ Gopal Singh, 466.

⁶⁴ Gopal Singh, 577.

scan the compositions of Guru Nanak word by word to detect a few. The deserted woman is compared in one verse to a corpse, with the implication that the husband is comparable to the soul. At the same time, looking at another's woman with lust is condemned.⁶⁵ Elsewhere, to lust for another's woman is to eat poison.⁶⁶ What is appreciated by Guru Nanak is fidelity on the part of man and dedication on the part of woman. The similes used for the latter are those of the female deer, the nightingale, the fish and the female snake. Above all, the dedicated woman is 'the *banjāran* of Ram'; she trades in the Lord's name and her capital too is the name.⁶⁷ There is one situation outside the sphere of domesticity which is highly commendable in the eyes of Guru Nanak. It is the position of a *bairāgan*. She discards all *haumai* and turns towards God. She is so immersed in truth that she is not bothered about what people think of her. In her own consciousness she is above all social taboos.

III

Much more frequently, however, Guru Nanak addresses himself to the unregenerate woman, the young innocent maiden with a potential for pleasing the spouse, or the spouse to be. She is told that the beloved spouse is the source of happiness. She can meet him through his kindness. His bed is glorious. She would be in bloom to see him. She should dedicate her mind and body to him. Imbued with his love, she would find peace in the name. She has to cultivate virtue and merit; she has to thirst for him.⁶⁸ It is useful to address the young woman because many of the ideas related to liberation can be brought in. We may cite another stanza to see how these ideas are expressed:⁶⁹

Intoxicated with the wine of youth in the home of her parents the

⁶⁵ A.G. Rag Gauri Cheti, 154-55.

⁶⁶ A.G. Rag Malar, 1255.

⁶⁷ A.G. Rag Gauri Bairāgan, 147.

⁶⁸ A.G. Rag Asa (Chhant), 435.

⁶⁹ A.G. Rag Suhī (Chhant), 763.

woman has forgotten that she is but a guest here. Dirty with demerit, she cannot acquire virtue without the *guru*. Alien to virtue, she has wasted her youth in delusion. The spouse is at the door of her home but she is not aware of the beloved spouse. She does not go to the true *guru* to follow the right path, and she has wasted the night in sleep. Nanak, she has become a widow in girlhood, and her body is withering.

Find for me the divine spouse whom I like; I am a sacrifice to him. He pervades the four *yugas* and all the three worlds obey his word (*bāni*). The spouse enjoys the *sohāgans* in the three worlds, but the meritless one remains at a distance from him. One finds as one aspires; the Lord fulfils all wishes. The woman of the Lord remains *sohāgan* for ever, and the widow never tastes the union. Nanak, I cherish the true spouse, the beloved friend who remains the same throughout the ages.

Find out the auspicious time so that I may go to the in-laws. The auspicious time is determined by the Lord and it cannot be postponed. One does what is decreed by him; what is written by him cannot be effaced. He is the bridegroom who does not need a marriage party; he pervades the three worlds. I am in distress and I wail in separation, like a young woman who pines for her young lover. Nanak, through the word one attains the peace of his abode, and one gets attached to the Lord's feet.

The father has sent her far away; she does not come home. She is pleased in the presence of the beloved spouse and he enjoys her; she adorns the house. Sought out by the true and beloved spouse, she is united with the beloved friend; she has acquired perfect wisdom and she has become distinguished. Through understanding imparted by the *guru*, the woman of merit has attained happy union in the abode of peace. She is in possession of truth and contentment; the true speech is what the beloved spouse likes. Nanak, she does not suffer the pain of separation; she becomes one with the Lord through the *guru*'s instruction.

The basic theme of this passage, as of many others, is the pursuit of *sahaj*, to become a *sohāgan*. This depends ultimately on the Lord's pleasure or grace. But one can prepare oneself for the possibility by listening to the *guru*'s instruction, reflection on the word, acceptance of the *hukam*, discarding sensual pleasures, and by acquiring virtue. The metaphors of the natal home, the marital home, the state of widowhood, the bridegroom, and the guest are brought in to deliver the essential message.

In another longish passage the young innocent girl is told not to be proud of her youth for she is a stranger to the husband-god within. Why o foolish woman are you looking for him outside when he is near, within yourself? The young woman is told to adorn herself with the fear of the Lord (*bhai*) and devotion to him (*bhav*) to receive the love of the spouse to become a *sohāgan*. What can the young one do if her husband (*kant*) does not desire her? She implores but finds no access to his palace. Nothing avails without good deeds, howsoever hard she may try. She is immersed in *māyā* due to her avarice, greed and pride. These are not the ways of meeting the spouse (*sauh*), but the simpleton of a woman does not know. She should ask the *sohāgans* how to get to the Lord. They would tell her that whatever he does should be welcome, and his command should be obeyed. Only he whose love enables her to receive the bliss should be the object of her devotion. She should do what he says and dedicate her body and mind to him – this is the 'scent' that attracts him. This is what the *sohāgans* say should be done. Sacrifice your 'self' to obtain the lord, for there is nothing else that works. Auspicious is the day when he chooses her for his grace, when she obtains the bliss. She becomes respectable in her family too when she becomes *sohāgan* by receiving her husband's love. Drenched in love and intoxicated with *sahaj*, she is dyed in his colour. She is the woman who is beautiful and wise.⁷⁰ But for the idea of the fear of the Lord, the ideas and metaphors used in this passage are close to what we found in the earlier passage.

Guru Nanak is seldom so immersed in femaleness as to lose his discrete identity for long. It is easy to paraphrase his metaphors. The following is a rather literal translation of one verse:⁷¹

The bride is bewitched by her lord and sleeps in his embrace. She is attuned to the truth and moves in the will of the *guru*. She is attuned to the truth and sleeps in the Lord's embrace, in the company of her women-friends. The name is enshrined in their minds and in single-minded devotion they are united with the

⁷⁰ A.G. Rag Tilang, 772.

⁷¹ A.G. Rag Bilawal (Chhant Dakhani), 843.

Lord through the true *guru*. They do not leave their Lord for a single moment; within them shines the light of the word, and all their fears are removed.

This verse has been actually paraphrased as follows:⁷²

The soul-woman (*jiv-istri*) who lives her life according to the *guru's* instruction and who is devoted to the eternal God, remains attached to the feet of the creator of *māyā*. In the company of her companions she remains constant in her devotion to the everlasting God, and the name takes root in her heart. She begins to trust the *guru*, and she does not forget God even for a moment, remembering him with every breath. With the light of the *guru's* word she is able to put an end to all kinds of fear.

The diction used by Guru Nanak appears to work simultaneously at two levels even when the woman expresses her pangs of separation. For example, 'how can I live without Har, my mother' is followed by 'Hail to the master of the world (Jagdis), praise be to him, I cannot live without Har. The thirsty woman thirsts for him all the night. The master of Lakshmi has captured my heart; only the Prabh knows the pain of others. The body is much in pain without Har; I have found Har through the *guru's* *sabd*. Be gracious O' Har; grant that my mind remains attached to your feet. Manohar has shown his grace to me; by singing his praises I have attained to fearless *sahaj*.⁷³ The use of the epithets Har, Jagdis, Prabh and Manohar in these lines does not allow the reader, or the listener, to be completely immersed in the female metaphor.

In view of the extracts given in the appendix, it is not necessary to cite many passages in support of the points made. However, we may refer to a few more to illustrate variation on the theme. In one verse, 'the woman of merit communicates merit and the woman without merit carries her distress within herself. She who seeks the spouse should know that he cannot be met through falsehood. Without the boat it is impossible to reach the beloved spouse who is far away.' The *guru* provides the boat to ferry across and he provides the ladder to ascend the

⁷² Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*.

⁷³ A.G. Rag Sarag (Ashtpadian), 1232.

citadel of the Lord.⁷⁴ In another verse, 'the friend has come home'; it is an occasion for rejoicing. The 'true one' has made this union possible. The purpose of life is attained. The women can sing the song of joy. The Prabh likes the praise of the true one. The *sabd* sets things right. The collyrium of *gian* shows all the three worlds. The body and mind are imbued with nectar, and the treasure of love is found within.⁷⁵ The woman who is indifferent to the spouse suffers the pain of separation. Immersed in *kām*, *krodh* and *ahankār*, she remains attached to *haumai*. Without the true name, she remains in delusion and regrets in the end. No one desires anything else but her spouse. Without the pleasure of *nām* and *sabd* there is nothing in one's life. Without *rām* one keeps on coming-and-going. The path is hard but there is no other way to reach the beloved spouse. It is only through the *sabd* of the true *guru* that the woman separated from him meets him. There is great pleasure in such a meeting. You are being called to his abode, do not delay matters any more; prepare yourself to meet him. Discard pride, for the *manmukh* keeps on coming-and-going. Smash your pitcher and dance with abandon without the veil on your face. When you reflect on the matter by turning to the *guru*, you know that the Lord recognizes himself in you.⁷⁶

In yet another passage, men and women of the world are compared with the crow that eats filth. This is false attachment. The deadly poison of *kām* and *krodh* finds its antidote only in *rām*. Human life is comparable to the whirlwind of sand in one sense and to the bubble of water in another. It is also like the potter's wheel. The light of *nām*, the *guru*, loving devotion and the *sabd* lead to the Lord's abode.⁷⁷ Even the verses of the Baramaha, in which we may expect greater authorial immersion in femaleness, are no different. We come upon the same ideas, the same images and the same metaphors. The essential concern is the same. Blessed are all seasons, months, days and

⁷⁴ A.G. Sri Rag, 17.

⁷⁵ A.G. Rag Suhi (Chhant), 764.

⁷⁶ A.G. Rag Tukhari (Chhant), 1064.

⁷⁷ A.G. Rag Basant (Ashtpadian Dotukian), 1187.

hours if one meets the Lord to attain *sahaj*.⁷⁸ Even in a verse in which Guru Nanak makes use of the Krishna-Gopis lore, the young woman discards all sensual pleasures on Hari's arrival in the *goul*; adorning herself with the *sabd* she prays to the *guru* in all humility that he may enable her to meet the lover-god; considering her devotion, he makes her free of *kām* and *krodh*; he leaves behind a young woman who is adorned with beauty.⁷⁹ Finally, we may notice a passage in which God's beauty is depicted in terms which are supposed to be appealing to women: his beautiful eyes and sparkling teeth, his sharp nose and luxurious hair, his lustrous body as if cast in gold, his necklace like Krishna's, his pleasing gait, his sweet voice, his alluring youthfulness, his rhythmic movements and his majestic appearance. 'She who is intoxicated with devotion to him becomes pure like the flowing water of the Ganges.' In this passage there are references also to *nām* and *bānī*, the rule of the Lord, *sahaj* through his service, the true Murarī, the grace of the *guru*, the ineffable master, and the truth.⁸⁰ Though the Lord is clearly male and the devotee female, the metaphor is not sustained.

IV

There has been a tendency among the historians of medieval India to equate devotional theism with 'Bhakti Movement'. However, the idea of loving devotion to a personal God was common to Vaishnava *bhakti*, the Sant tradition, and Sufism. Nevertheless, even within Vaishnava *bhakti* the phenomenon of differentiation was noticed by R.G. Bhandarkar more than half a century ago.⁸¹ Though a clear distinction is made by scholars now between Vaishnava *bhakti* and the Sant tradition, the latter is treated as a single undifferentiated whole. It may

⁷⁸ A.G. Rag Tukhari (Chhant), 1107-10. Also, Appendix, Extract XXI.

⁷⁹ A.G. Rag Bilawal, 843.

⁸⁰ A.G. Rag Vadhans, 566.

⁸¹ R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1929.

be relevant, therefore, to bring in Kabir, who is believed to be the most important exponent of the Sant tradition, for a comparison with Guru Nanak from our present viewpoint. Fortunately, a good analysis of Kabir's position on the subject of patriarchy has been published recently and we can safely turn to this analysis for the purpose of comparison.⁸²

In Kabir, according to Dr. Kumkum Sangari, the egalitarian concepts of body, of soul, of knowledge, of *māyā* and creation, and of *nirgun* god contest caste, sectarian differences, and orthodox ritual, but not patriarchal value structures. The moment his god becomes *sagun*, he acquires male attributes and it is possible to enter into relationship of love with this personal God. Kabir dwells on all the emotions of love : longing, intoxication, the pain of separation, delirium, and suffering. At the same time, he constructs a patriarchal typology of woman for ascetic transcendence. The woman is an obstacle to salvation. Her sexuality should be subjected to usual regulation.

The idea is elaborated further. Kabir has two notions of *māyā*. At one level, *māyā* is a pervasive cosmic illusion: it is everything that is false. Therefore, it is a levelling, a democratizing and an egalitarian concept which can be used to attack caste, sectarian differences and Brahmanical institutions. This *māyā* is ungendered : it is neither male nor female. At another level, *māyā* is conceived as a removable obstacle to salvation. Here, woman and *māyā* become indistinguishable, if not virtually interchangeable. Kabir appears to postulate three sorts of femaleness : the *strisbhav*, the *stridharma*, and the 'higher femaleness' of *bhakti*. The first is to be totally subdued, and the commendable traits of the second are to be etherialized into spirituality for transmutation

⁸² Kumkum Sangari, 'Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of Bhakti', *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 7, 1990, 1464-75; July 14, 1990, 1537-51.

A revised version of this article was consulted in typescript as an 'occasional paper' of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi, through the courtesy of its Director, Professor Ravinder Kumar.

into the femaleness of *bhakti*. The woman of the *strisbhava* is the mistress of the senses; the use of patriarchal metaphors in relation of her evokes the typology of *dohāgin*. By contrast, the *sohāgin* is the model of *stri-dharma*, a model in which sexual desires are well channelled; she is all fidelity, without the slightest trace of promiscuity. She surrenders her heart, body and mind to her husband; her *shringāra* is to please him alone. It is of no use without devotion; it is worthless if he does not desire her. She is rewarded with fidelity when she discards all other hopes and desires. Thus, in Kabir, patriarchal values centre on the family as an institution which guarantees licit, righteous progeny, restrains female sexuality, and reproduces a normative notion of marriage.

In many of his verses, Kabir uses female voice with differing degrees of immersion in femaleness, ranging from analogy with *bhakti*, in which the *bhakt* retains his discrete identity, to an authorial immersion in metaphor. The woman of this voice is one among many who are devoted to a single lord. Their objective is *sohāg*, that is union with the lord. The ideology guarantees wisely fidelity and indissoluble marriage as much as metaphoric recognition of god who leads to *mukti*. The use of female devotional voice gives access to divine love. However, the saint masters *māyā* in order to enslave himself to god. Kabir poses an active opposition between sexual desire (*kām*) and spiritual desire (*prem*). The female devotional voice tends to become an abstraction, and the union of wife with the husband becomes unity in duality. The soul-wife may sometimes desire reciprocity, but much more often she guarantees only her own strict fidelity. The invocation is monogamous in its intensity and the associated structure of values. The *bhakt-ātmā* is in effect the *pativrata* and the *sohāgin* rolled into one. For self-transformation to become a saint, negotiation of the lower female desire becomes necessary to incorporate higher forms of female duty into male transcendence. Somewhere on this path patriarchal values are religitimized, and the choice of renunciation begins to appear as an option open to men alone. Thus in a circumlocutory fashion women continue to get salvation through their husbands.

Dr. Sangari finds in Kabir a sustained and complex adjustment with patriarchal values in uneasy companionship with an egalitarian *bhakti* which offers direct access to God, claims a single origin for all human beings, and describes the body, the heart, the soul, and true knowledge as ungendered. Patriarchal values are not incidental; they actively compose Kabir's *bhakti*. The *pativrata* rejects but also regulates worldiness. Disorder in marriage and in the faculties of the soul are analogues for each other. Their inter-relation is ultimately to be located not in the figural realm of devotional poetry but in existing, or desired, patriarchal relations. Coherence is sought and guaranteed in both the social and the transcendent realm. One institutional base is retained to facilitate attack on other institutions. Patriarchal values and 'belief' interlock. The paraphraseability of analogies and 'low-risk metaphors' suggest a process by which religious bonding can occur on a patriarchal consensual ground.

A few other aspects of Kabir's position are noted by Dr. Sangari in a section on patriarchal values and the use of female devotional voice in other *bhaktas*. She makes it clear that 'Kabir is not alone in his contradictions'. For our present purpose, we may concentrate on him alone. He poses opposition between natal family (*nahar*) and marital family (*sasural*) as metaphors for this world (*lok*) and the other (*parlok*), the first symbolizing falsehood and ignorance and the second, truth and knowledge. In the figure of the *virahini*, which is common to all devotional theists, the female voice becomes the embodiment of an exquisite suffering. Since *māyā* separates the devotee from god, all life becomes yearning. There is a movement first from the actual to the metaphor, and then to metaphysics of the human soul, love is experienced as suffering. In Kabir, there is a slide from *virah* to widowhood. Since the beloved is 'within' oneself, immolation of the 'self' leads to union with husband-god. In the figure of *satī*, thus, come together the virtue of the *pativrata*, the burning pain of the *virahini*, and the idealism of the *virah*. What she represents becomes an ideal model for the *bhakti*.

As a social definition and as a metaphor, femaleness for

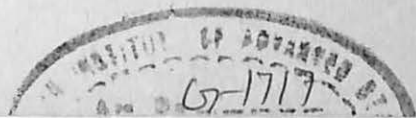
Kabir begins to prop a metaphysic which underpins patriarchal social practice. Logically, just as it is possible to become *jīvan-mukta*, it is possible to become *sattī*-in-life. The relevant question is posed; why not immolate 'self' while the husband is alive, why wait for his death? This position contradicts the practice of immolation, but nonetheless it upholds *sattī* metaphorically, ideologically and inspirationally.

V

Turning again to Guru Nanak, we may notice first that the female of the *strīsbhau* is virtually absent in his verses. In spite of the use of a common diction, the import changes. The counterpart of the 'fallen' female is the woman attached to *māyā*. She is a victim of the same five adversaries (*kām, krodh, lobh, moh, haṅkār*) as keep man in bondage. She is very much the counterpart of Guru Nanak's *manmukh*, the self-willed man. The good woman is devoted to her spouse, but much more important is her appropriation of the truth, the name and the word. She needs the mediacy of the *guru* and the grace of God as much as the man who turns to the *guru* (*gurmukh*). If no man can 'achieve' or 'earn' emancipation, for in the last analysis it depends on God's grace, it is for the 'spouse' of the good woman too to decide whether or not to make her *sohāgan*. The ultimate objective for woman as for man is *sahaj*, the state of eternal bliss in union with God, the mingling of light with light. The metaphors used in the case of the woman can obviously be different, but the import remains the same because the metaphors are seldom sustained. The female voice appears to bring the woman within the orbit of emancipatory venture, so much so that even the widow can become a *bairāgan*.

To pursue the argument further, to covet the wife of another person, or an unwedded woman, is immoral in Guru Nanak's system of values. However, the advocacy of mutual fidelity does not necessarily ensure monogamy. Furthermore, the ideal-wife is squarely placed in the patriarchal structure as a *sohāgan*. Guru Nanak appears to create a larger space for women than what we find in

ANDH or perhaps in the whole range of Indian literature spiring from devotional theism. Total equality of woman with man in the spiritual realm was a radical idea in Indian history, especially because it embraced all women; it was not confined to female *bhikhus* or *bhaktas*. Guru Nanak's symbolic attack on discrimination against women due to physiological differences carried the idea of equality a long step forward. If he does not carry it into the home, giving a share to the daughter in ancestral property, he does not say anything which can be used to support inequality of any kind. However, much of the space he creates for women is created within the patriarchal framework.



APPENDIX

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADI GRANTH

The number of verses in which Guru Nanak appears to address himself to women, or gives contextual comment on them, or uses female voice, is rather large. We have referred to many such verses in the text of this paper. Twenty-seven extracts in English translation are given in this appendix. There are still other verses which figure neither in the text nor in the appendix. However, the range of ideas expressed in verses having a bearing on the subject of women and patriarchy is not very wide. It can therefore be maintained that the text and the appendix of this paper, together, represent nearly all the ideas of Guru Nanak on this subject.

It does not mean, however, that other scholars cannot see a different meaning or significance in the evidence used here. In fact one reason for giving these extracts is precisely this: that other scholars may get some idea of the original evidence. An attempt has been made to remain close to the original text, but the translation is not literal at all places. The well known annotation of the Granth Sahib by Professor Sahib Singh has been consulted for understanding the text, and at least one English translation has been kept in view, that of Dr. Gopal Singh. It may be pointed out, however, that the translation given here is based on my own understanding of the original text. It does not necessarily follow either Professor Sahib Singh or Dr. Gopal Singh. For comparison, the page numbers of the Adi Granth and the translation by Dr. Gopal Singh are given at the end as 'references'.

These extracts would reinforce the argument offered in the text of the paper, just as what is given in the text of the paper would illumine the extracts. A number of original terms have been retained in the extracts, without any translation at some places and with a translation at others where the original term is given in brackets. About

a score of epithets are used for God in the original passages, like Banjara, Brahm, Gosai, Har, Har-Var, Kant, Khasam, Mohan, Nah, Niranjan, Pir, Prabhu, Pritam, Ram, Sahib, Sajan, Sauh, Thakur and Var. In the translation, however, only a few epithets are used, treating several of the original terms as synonymous. The term 'lord' is generally used for God as Har or Hari, with 'master' as a variant. The latter is generally a rendering of Prabhu, Sahib or Thakur. The term 'spouse' is used for Khasam, Nah, Sauh and Var. The term 'divine spouse' is used for Har-Var. Sajan is rendered as 'friend' and Pritam as 'beloved friend'. The term 'beloved spouse' is used for Pir. Mohan is rendered as 'captor'. Though most of the terms for God in the original have reference to him as friend, husband and lover (largely because of the nature of this selection), the epithet Niranjan, which refers to the state of attributelessness, also occurs at places. Its use is indicated by the English term 'without material sign' or 'signless'. *Gun Chār* is rendered as 'comely attributes'.

Some of the other original terms relate to 'divine self-expression' and the goal of human life. The term *nām* or *sāchā-nām*, rendered as 'the name' or 'the true name', refers generally to the object of revelation, that is God in his state of attributelessness. The terms *sabd*, *sāchā-sabd*, *bānī* and *gurbānī* generally refer to the medium of expression and they are rendered into English as 'the word', 'the true word' or 'the guru's word'. The term *guru* or *satguru* means the preceptor or the true preceptor; it generally refers to God. The term *hukam* or *raza* or *bhāna* generally refers to God's command or will as well as its willing acceptance by human beings. The grace of God is *nādar* or *kirpa*; it is rendered into English also as 'gracious kindness'. The goal is referred to as *sahaj*, a state of eternal peace and bliss. A synonym for the state of *sahaj* is *nirban*. It is the state of union with the Lord, the mingling of light with light. By attaining this state, one gains access to God's abode (*māhal*). It is like obtaining the best things imaginable, the nine-treasures (*nau-nidh*). It is a state beyond the exigencies of time and death (*kāl*). God alone is eternal and, therefore, 'the true one' (*sāchā*); to realize this is to appropriate truth (*sāchch*). The world as God's

sport or play is *bāji* or *khel*. Whatever is not eternal is 'the other'; it is *māyā*. To affiliate oneself to 'the other' is to remain in *dūbidha*. To attribute things to oneself is to cherish *haumai* in one's heart and soul (*man*) and to remain self-centred (*manmukh*). The antidote to this disease is to turn to the *guru*, to become *gurmukh*. By turning to the *guru* one can become a holy person, a *sant*; a congregation of such holy persons is *sant-sabhā*.

There are certain terms reserved for women. The *chakwi* bird, generally believed to be fascinated by the sun, can be a metaphor for the woman who is devoted to God. She cherishes her capital (*rās*). By selfless devotion to God a woman becomes a *batragān*. The woman with merit and good qualities is *gunwanti*. When she possesses good manners she is *suchajji*. She possesses wisdom (*mat*, *surt*, *hikmat*) and she has intelligence (*chaturāi*). She can be extremely wise (*khari-siāni*). She who is loved and enjoyed by her husband is a *sohāgan*. She who is so attracted by other things that she cannot turn to her husband is a *dohāgan*: she remains alien to the bliss of union. The *kulakhani* is rendered as 'of evil conduct'. The pangs of separation, *birha*, can be felt only by the woman who knows love and cherishes to be with her husband. On meeting the spouse she becomes steady (*rahansi*). She can be elected as a *panch*, when she does justice (*adl*). There are sixteen items with which a woman can adorn herself; each one of them constitutes her *sigār*. An item commonly used for *sigār* is *chandān*. Whereas for men the apt metaphor for the transitory world can be the *sarāi*, for women it is *goil*, the place to which the cowherds take the cows for grazing. The *harem* is that part of a house which is meant for its women. The home of the parents is *pitukaray*, or this world, and the marital home is *sauhray*, or the next world, which is her real home (*nij-ghar*). In her natal home she is a stranger as if she is abroad (*wandhū*), while her spouse, that is God, is in the country (*des*).

There are a few other terms which are not used as metaphors but which are not easy to translate into English. One of these is *hath* which refers to the techniques and methods used by the Gorakhnāthi *jogis* to attain the state of *sahaj*. *Bhekh* refers to the dress and

appearance peculiar to an order of ascetics. *Kul* refers to family, *jāti* to occupational group, and *baran* or *varna* refers to caste. *Pandit* is a learned Brahman and what he recites as sacred lore is *mantar* or *mantra*. *Āk* is a wild plant which gives no shade, and its juice is poisonous. Babur is referred to as *Mir*. There is one term which came originally from the army and administration to acquire a metaphorical significance in the compositions of Guru Nanak: it is *nīsān*. It was a mark of status and power. For Guru Nanak, 'the word' and 'the name' serve as the *nīsān* that finds recognition in the court of God, serving as a kind of passport. A synonym for *nīsān* is *parwāna* rendered as 'document'.

These introductory paragraphs may facilitate appreciation of the extracts which follow. In any case, most of the terms are used in contexts which make their import clear. It must be added that the tense or the person may change even in a single verse of the translation. This is true of the original too, but the tense or the person in the original is not always the same as in the translation. The primary aim has been to make the meaning clear.

I

1. Accursed is the life of *dohāgan* who is lured by the love of 'the other'. She is like the crumbling wall of saline earth. Without the word (*sabd*), there is no peace, and sorrow does not depart without the beloved spouse (*pir*). What is the point in your *sigār* without him, you foolish woman? You find no support in the home and you suffer humiliation in the court.

2. He knows everything and he does not forget. The true one is the true farmer; he ploughs and furrows the land to sow the seed of the true name (*nām*). Through his grace grows the one name which is the equal of all the nine-treasures (*nau-nidh*).

3. What can be the merit in the conduct of a man who does not recognize the *guru*? He forgets the name in ignorance; he is blind for he is self-centred (*manmukh*). His coming-and-going will not end; he will continue to suffer the pain of death and re-birth.

4. Costly *chandan*, saffron, vermilion for the parting of the hair, abundance of scents, camphor in the betel-leaf – all these are of no use if the woman fails to please the spouse (*kantl*).

5. Useless are her pleasures and pointless is her adornment (*sīgār*). If one does not understand the word, one finds no place of honour in the *guru's* court. Nanak, blessed is the woman who loves her spouse (*sauh*).

II

1. If your mind is impure, your body and your tongue also become impure. If your mouth is impure for you speak untruth, it is bound to remain impure. Without the water of the word it cannot be cleansed; truth comes from the true one. How can there be peace without merit, you foolish woman? The beloved spouse will enjoy you and you will find peace and love only in the true word.

2. When the beloved spouse is away, the woman pines in separation. She cries to invoke pity, and her state is that of the fish in shallow water. Peace comes when the beloved spouse so wills and turns to her in gracious kindness (*nadar*).

3. Sing praises of the beloved spouse in the company of your friends. Your frame will become beautiful when you see him with your mind imbued with love. Adorned with the word, you acquire the merit to enjoy the beloved spouse.

4. Useless is the woman who is false and meritless. She has no peace in her marital home; she is consumed by falsehood. Forgotten by the spouse (*kantl*), she suffers the plight of coming-and-going.

5. What for was the beautiful woman forsaken by the beloved spouse? Useless to him, she was fond of useless prattle. She found no support in the home and no refuge at his door; she is forsaken because she sought pleasure elsewhere.

6. The *pandit* reads books but does not grasp the true meaning. He advises others but himself trades in *māyā*. The whole world wanders in vain due to false talk; the essence of the matter is to live by the word.

7. There are many *pandits* and astrologers who reflect on the Vedas. They relish wrangling, and they come-and-go in vain. One is saved by the *guru's* grace and never by mere talk.

8. All other women have merit but I have none. The woman who is liked by the divine spouse is beautiful; may he like me. Only the word leads to the union that knows no separation.

III

1. Useless without the true one are muttering of *mantras*, austerities, restraint over the senses, living at the places of pilgrimage, charity and other such acts. One reaps as one sows; worthless is life without merit. She who slaves for merit finds peace, you foolish woman. Discard demerit and meditate on the perfect one through the *guru's* instruction.

2. With no capital, the trader may look in vain for merchandise in the four corners of the earth. He does not know himself; his goods are lying useless in the home. Without a true transaction there is much suffering; the false one is after false goods.

3. One who reflects on the treasure within earns profit day and night. The goods come home; the transaction is completed. Trade with the true trader; turn to the *guru* and reflect on God (Brahm).

4. We find ourselves in the company of holy men (*sants*) when the master so wills. They who have the light within do not suffer separation. Truth subsists in the true one; address your love to the true one alone.

5. They who know themselves, find the abode of God within. Devoted to the true one, they find the truth. The true Lord is in all the three worlds, and true is the name of the true one.

6. Beautiful is the woman who recognizes the beloved spouse within. She is called to his abode and enjoyed in love. The true bride is she who wins the beloved spouse by her merit.

7. I wander in vain in the desert and in the hills; I wander in the wilderness, but I find no understanding

without the *guru*. Stranger to the name, I come-and-go again and again.

8. Ask those way-farers who walk as his servants; they who regard him as their lord are not detained at his door. The only one pervades all; there is no other.

IV

1. You embellished woman, your youth is wasted without the beloved spouse. You cannot enjoy the bridal bed and your *sīgār* is useless without him. There is no enjoyment for the *dohāgan* in the bridal bed for the master is not at home. Meditate on Ram to find peace, o my *man*. You do not find love without the *guru* and enjoyment lies in the word alone.

2. Peace lies in the service of the *guru*; the ornament that pleases the divine spouse (*Har-Var*) is a steady state of mind (*sahaj*). The bed of the beloved spouse is enjoyed through truth, and this enjoyment increases love. Understanding comes by turning to the *guru*, and the master of comely attributes (*gun chār*) makes you meet the *guru*.

3. You meet the spouse, dear woman, through truth, and you are bound in love through enjoyment. Your body and mind blossom in truth, and this state is beyond reckoning in price. The *sohāgan* finds him in the home and she becomes pure through the true name.

4. The woman enjoys the beloved spouse when the ego in her mind is extinguished. The pearls on the same thread become a necklace. Peace arises from association with holy men (*sant sabhā*) who have turned to the true one and lean on the name.

5. In a moment one is born, in a moment one dies; in a moment one comes, in a moment one goes. The one who recognizes the word and remains steadfast is not bothered by death (*kāl*). The Lord cannot be weighed, nor can he be described

6. They who trade with the master-trader get their accounts accredited; they trade in truth and gain *raza* as their profit. Their true capital is the *guru* who is devoid of greed and avarice.

7. They who turn to the *guru* get their goods weighed in the balance of truth; The lure of desire and hope is stopped by the true word of the *guru*. He will himself weigh and, being the perfect weigher, he will weigh perfectly.

8. One does not attain to liberation by mere talk, nor by reading heavy loads of books. The body is not purified without loving devotion to God. Nanak, may I never forget the name so that the Lord may unite me with himself.

V

1. The woman passes the night in pain and cannot sleep. Separated from the beloved spouse she wears thin. You can see how thin she wears on account of her separation from the spouse (*kanṭ*). Tasteless are all delicacies to her and her *sīgār* is of no avail. Intoxicated by the wine of youth and consumed by pride, she has no milk in her breasts. Nanak, the woman meets her spouse only if he desires. There is no sleep without the beloved spouse.

2. Without the dear husband, the woman is weak and helpless. How would she attain peace without lodging him in her heart? Ask your friends, there is no home without the master. You cannot attain to the love of the true one without the name. Lodge the truth in your mind and make contentment your friend so that you may meet the spouse through the *guru's* instruction. Nanak, the woman who never loses hold of the name attains *sahaj*.

3. Let us come together dear friends and dwell on the beloved spouse. Through the word I shall write the message to him. The *guru* has revealed the true word; the *manmukh* who does not turn to the word shall regret in the end. On recognizing the truth, the wandering mind has been stilled. The instruction in truth remains always fresh and love is strengthened by the word. Nanak, we meet him through his grace (*nadar*); let us come together, my friends.

4. My desire is fulfilled now that my friend (*sajan*) has come home. On my meeting the spouse (*var*), the women are singing the song of joy. By singing his praises and songs of joy the woman is drenched in love and she is full

of zeal. The friends are pleased and the enemies are miserable; I have gained the truth by meditating on the truth. Absorbed in joy day and night, the woman prays in all humility. Nanak, my desire is fulfilled and I revel with the beloved spouse.

VI

1. Hear o' my spouse, my master, the lone one in the wilderness. How can I be comforted without the spouse (*nah*) o' my self-dependent master (*prabhu*). I cannot live without the spouse for the night is extremely painful. I cannot sleep and I long for love; hear my prayer. I wail alone and there is no one to help me except you, o' my beloved. Nanak, the woman suffers without the beloved friend (*pritam*) and she can meet him only when he wills.

2. She who has been discarded by the beloved spouse cannot be united with him by anyone else. She who is adorned with the word tastes the joy of love. Adorned by the word, she obtains honour and her body is lighted by the lamp of love. Listen to me, my dear friend, the woman who sings praises of the true one is merged with him. United with him by the true *guru* she is enjoyed by the beloved spouse and she blossoms through the eternal *bānī*. Nanak, the woman meets the beloved spouse only when he desires her.

VII

1. They whose heads were adorned by plaits and the parting of whose hair was filled with vermillion, their hair have been sheared by the scissors and their necks are laden with dust. They used to live within palaces and now they cannot sit even outside. Hail to you, all hail! I do not know your limits, O Primal Lord; you cause things to happen and you gaze at them.

2. When they were married, their spouses adorned their sides. They came in litters, with ivory bangles around their wrists. Water was waved over their heads to ward off evil, and they held glittering fans in their hands.

3. They received one lac for sitting down and another for standing up. They tasted dried nuts and dates and enjoyed the bridal bed. Now they have the noose in place of the necklace of pearls around their necks.

4. Wealth and beauty, the two sources of pleasure in the past, have now become their enemies. As ordered, the soldiers have dishonoured them and carried them off. The Lord gives greatness to whom he wills, and he awards punishment. Why would we receive punishment if we are heedful in time.

5. The kings lost all sense in the pursuit of pleasure. Now that Babur's writ is running, the princes do not get bread to eat.

6. Some used to let the time of prayers pass and others used to ignore the time of worship. How did the Hindu women (*hinduāniān*) do without the kitchen square and a bath and the saffron on their foreheads? Never did they think of Ram before and now they cannot utter Khuda to invoke pity.

7. Some have returned home and others ask about those who have not. Some were destined to wait for the rest of their lives. Nanak, what the Lord wills comes to pass; what is man?

VIII

1. Where are the sports, the stables, the horses, the trumpets and the pipes? Where are the sword-belts and the red woollen tunics? Where are the looking glasses and the beautiful faces they reflected? They are not to be seen any more. The universe is yours, O' Lord, and you are its master (*gosai*). You make one moment and unmake the other. Even brothers fight each other for gold and earthly possessions.

2. Where are the houses, the gates, the mansions and the palaces, and where are the beautiful *sarāis*? Where is the comfortable bridal bed and the beautiful women whose sight banished sleep? Where are the betel-leaves and their sellers, and where are the seraglios (*harma*)? They have vanished like shadows.

3. Much suffering is caused by gold, and much

hardship is brought by riches. Wealth cannot be acquired without sin, and it does not go with any one after death. They who are marked for destruction their goodness is destroyed first.

4. Millions of *pirs* prayed for his halt when they heard of the invasion of the *Mir*. Rock-like mansions and old seats were razed to the ground; princes were cut up and rolled in dust. No Mughal was blinded and none showed a miracle.

5. The Mughals and the Pathans fought each other and swords clanged on the field of battle. The Mughals fired guns and the Pathans advanced with elephants. They whose sheet of honour was torn in the court were bound to die.

6. If one was a Hinduāni, another was a Turkāni, a Bhattiāni or a Thakurāni; torn was the veil of some from head to foot, and others were sent to the cremation ground. How did they pass the night whose warriors did not come home?

7. The Lord himself does whatever happens, to whom can one complain? Peace and sorrow are due to your will, O' Lord, to whom can we go and cry? Nanak, the master of command ensures that his order is obeyed, and we receive what is decreed.

IX

1. The woman of merit (*gunwantī*) enjoys the spouse and the woman without merit wails in woe. She too can enjoy him if she acquires merit. My spouse is the only source of joy, why should I go to another in search of pleasure?

2. Let good deeds be the charm and let the mind become the thread on which priceless gems are strung.

3. I do not walk on the way and I say that I have arrived. If I do not speak with the Lord, how can I live in the home?

4. Nanak, there is only one master and there is no other. She who remains attached to the spouse is enjoyed by him.

The peacocks sing and dance, my sister, the month of Sawan has come. Fascinating are the scenes, the dagger-like eyebrows of a young maiden; captivating is their lure. Shattering is your vision, O'Lord, I am a sacrifice to your name. Your presence in everything makes me speak of them with pride; what pride can be there without you? Break the ivory bangles against the bed, you woman, break the arms of your bed, and your own arms too. You have taken pains to adorn yourself but your spouse is enjoying others. You do not know the right pedlar and you do not have the right bangles. May those arms be burnt which are not around the neck of the spouse. All my friends have gone to please the spouse but I, the wretched one, do not know where to go. O' my friend I presume to have all the good manners but none of these is pleasing to my spouse. Well woven are the plaits on my head and the parting of my hair is filled with vermillion. But when I go to the Lord I am not accepted, and I am consumed by grief. When I weep and wail, the whole world wails with me, even the birds in the woods. What does not relent is the *birha* of my body in separation from the beloved spouse. He appeared in my dream but only to disappear, and I shed bitter tears. I cannot come to you my dear and I cannot send even a messenger. Let the sleep come over me, so that I may see the spouse again. What would you give, Nanak, to the one who talks to you of the master? You should sever your head from the body so that it may serve as his seat, and you should serve him without your head. If the spouse becomes a stranger, why not offer life to conciliate him?

XI

1. Let us come together my friends and meditate on the true name. Let us grieve over our separation and remember the master. Remember the master and keep in view the path that leads to him. He who gives also takes away and whatever happens is willed by him. Whatever he allots we receive; we have no power in the matter. Let us

come together my friends and meditate on the true name.

2. If you were to know how to die, you people, you would not wail over death. Serve the all-powerful master (*sahib*) so that the path becomes easy to tread. If you follow the right path you find the reward at the end, and you obtain honour. If you sacrifice your self you are absorbed in the truth and you receive honour. You reach the spouse's abode and he likes you and revels with you in love. If you were to know how to die, you people, you would not wail over death.

3. Brave are they who die unto themselves and their sacrifice is accepted by the Lord. Brave are they who find true honour in his court. They find honour in his court and they leave this world with honour; they suffer no pain hereafter. You receive the fruit if you meditate on the only one whose service dispels fear. You should never talk with pride and you should restrain yourself; what is in your heart is known to the Lord. Brave are they who die unto themselves and their sacrifice is accepted by the Lord.

4. Nanak, the whole world is a play (*bāji*), for whom then should you wail? The Lord does what he wills and sees what he does; he looks after his creation. He looks after his creation and gives support; he knows what he does. He sees everything and he knows everything; he knows how to order. He who does also knows, and he reveals himself in infinite forms. Nanak, the whole world is a play, for whom then should you wail?

XII

1. The beloved spouse is with you but you are so deluded by other things that you do not know. Your lot is determined by your deeds in past lives. What is written in one's lot on the basis of the past deeds cannot be effaced and I do not know what will happen? Without a good quality, without good conduct, and without loving devotion, the woman without merit will wail and cry again and again. Wealth and youth are like the shade of *āk*; you grow old and your days come to an end. Nanak, without the name you remain *dohāgan*; attached to falsehood you

remain separated.

2. You are a drowned woman and your home is ruined; live now in loving devotion to the *guru*. Meditate on the true *nām* so that you may receive peace from the abode of grace (*mahal*). Peace comes by meditating on the divine name; we live only for a few days in the natal home. On attaining truth you may reach your real home (*nij-ghar*) and sit with the beloved for ever. Listen to me you people, you do not reach the real home without loving devotion. Nanak, only she meets the beloved spouse who is imbued with the true name.

3. If the woman loves the beloved spouse, he too may love her. Imbued with the love of the beloved friend (*prītam*), she reflects on the *guru's* word. Reflecting on the *guru's* word, the beloved of the spouse adores him in all humility. She burns all desire for earthly things (*māyā*) and revels in the love of the beloved friend (*prītam*). Imbued with love of the true Lord she subdues her *man* and becomes beautiful. Nanak, the *sohāgan* dwells in truth, absorbed in the love of the beloved spouse.

4. The woman adorns the home if the beloved spouse loves her. False words are of no use. False words are useless because she cannot see the beloved spouse. Without any merit, she is abandoned by the spouse and her nights become painful. Without the *guru's* word she remains entangled in the net and never reaches the abode (*mahal*). When she comes to know herself she attains *sahaj* through the *guru's* grace.

5. Blessed is the *sohāgan* who knows the beloved spouse. Without the name the false one gathers falsehood. But she who is adorned with devotion and is imbued with the loving fear of the Lord is liked by the true one. Imbued with love, she meets the beloved spouse who is young and joyous. Blossomed by the *guru's* word, she revels in the spouse as the fruit of her merit. Nanak, honour is received through truth and the woman adorns the home of the beloved spouse.

XIII

1. Mercerized in *māyā*, my body is dyed in greed. This

cloak does not appeal to my spouse, how can I ascend the bridal bed? I am a sacrifice to you. You merciful Lord, I am a sacrifice to you. I am a sacrifice to them who appropriate your name. Who appropriate your name, I am a sacrifice to them.

2. If the body becomes the dyer's vat, my dear, and the fast dye of the name is used by the master-dyer himself, the colour acquired will be rare indeed.

3. They whose cloaks are thus dyed red, my dear, the spouse is pleased with them. Nanak, I pray for the dust of their feet.

4. He himself adorns, he himself dyes, and he himself shows grace. Nanak, if the woman pleases the spouse, he himself chooses to enjoy her.

XIV

1. Why are you proud, you young woman? Why don't you enjoy the love of the Lord (Har) in your own home? The spouse is close to you, foolish woman, what are you searching outside? Use the collyrium of fear in your eyes and put on the *sīgār* of love. Only that woman is regarded as *sohāgan* whom the spouse loves.

2. What can the young woman do if the spouse does not like her? She cries much to invoke pity but she does not reach the abode. Much though she may wander, she would obtain nothing without good deeds. Imbued with avarice, greed and pride, she remains absorbed in *māyā*. Because of this she fails to meet the spouse and she remains ignorant.

3. Go and ask the *sohāgans* how did they meet the spouse? They accept whatever he does, without asserting their will (*hukam*) or wisdom (*hikmat*). They stick to his feet through whose love they obtain the gift of love. Devote your body and mind to him and do whatever he says : this is the sweet scent that pleases him. This is what the *sohāgans* say, my sister, this is how we can meet the spouse.

4. Only by losing ourselves we find the spouse: there is no clever device. Auspicious is the day when the spouse looks at the woman with grace and she receives all the

nine-treasures. She alone is *sohāgan*, Nanak, who is the beloved of her spouse; she alone commands respect. Absorbed in love day and night, she is dyed in *sahaj*. She alone is beautiful; she alone is wise.

XV

1. I have all demerits and I possess no merit. How can I meet the spouse? I have no beauty and my eyes are not fascinating. I have no manners and my words are not sweet.

2. The woman should adorn herself with *sahaj*. But she would become *sohāgan* only if the spouse desires her.

3. He has no form, no sign. One cannot meditate on the Lord when one is nearing the end.

4. I have no high consciousness, no wisdom (*surt, mat*) and no intelligence (*chaturāī*). Attach me to your feet, through your grace O' Lord.

5. Extremely wise (*khari sīānī*) but not liked by the spouse, the woman remains attached to *māijā* and subject to delusion.

6. She can meet the spouse only if she discards her *haumai*. And that woman, my dear, can receive the nine-treasures.

7. I have suffered the pain of separation life after life. Hold my hand now my beloved master, my king, Nanak, the spouse is and shall ever be; he will enjoy whomever he likes.

XVI

Kuchajji

I have no good manners and I have many blemishes, how can I go to meet the spouse? There are many others who are far superior to me, and no one knows my name. The friends who have met the spouse are enjoying as if they were under the shade of a mango tree. I do not have their qualities, how can I blame others? How can I dilate upon your attributes and how can I appreciate your name? Even a single attribute is beyond my reach; I can

only be a sacrifice unto you. Gold and silver, pearls and rubies – these things have been given by the spouse but I am engrossed in them. Mansions of mud and stone I regard as my capital (*mās*). I am lost in these attractive things and I do not sit with my spouse. The cries of cranes are fading away in the sky and herons are sitting in their place. The woman is going to her in-laws, with what face will she face them? The day has dawned while I remained asleep, forgetful of the path on which I was to tread. Separated from the spouse, I have paved the way for sorrow and suffering. You possess all the merit and I have none, O' Lord; the only prayer of Nanak is that you may give one night to me, the *dohāgan*, as you have given all other nights to *sohāgans*.

XVII

Suchajji

When you are with me, o' my master, I have everything; you are my capital. When I dwell in you I am at peace; when you manifest yourself within me I get recognition. One sits on the throne when you will; one renounces the world and begs from door to door when you will. The desert is submerged by the sea when you will, and the lotus blossoms in the sky. We cross the ocean when you will; we drown in the mid-sea when you will. You fascinate as the spouse when you will, and we are absorbed in praising your attributes. You are the dreadful spouse when you will, and I suffer the plight of coming-and-going. You are unfathomable and beyond all measure; I say this again and again and I fall at your door. What may I ask for and what may I say for you to hear? Only this that I crave for your vision. One meets the spouse through the *guru's* word; it is the prayer of Nanak that he may meet the Lord.

XVIII

1. Come, my friend (*sajan*) let me have your vision. Up in my home I am looking out for you with great zeal. With great zeal in my heart, I submit that my trust is only in

you. Your vision has detached me from the world and the suffering of birth and death has ended. You are recognized through the light that pervades all and you are met through love. Nanak, praise be to the friend, he is seen within oneself through truth.

2. The friend has come home and the woman is very happy. Fascinated by the Lord through the true word, she is steady (*rahansī*) after seeing the master (*thakur*). Steady in merit she is happy when she is enjoyed by the joyous lord. All demerits destroyed, she is filled with merit by the perfect creator. Having vanquished the adversaries she has joined the five elect (*panchāyan*); now she ponders and judges (*adl karay*). Nanak, the name of Ram has ferried her across and she has met the dear one through the *guru's* instruction.

3. The young woman has found her spouse and all her hopes and desires are fulfilled through the word. She has met the beloved spouse who is everywhere and never far. Never far is the Lord, he is in everyone, and all are his women. He is the enjoyer and he enjoys whom he likes; this is his greatness. Immortal, immovable, invaluable, and infinite is he; the true one is found through the perfect *guru*. Nanak, the deviser of happy conjunction bestows attachment to him through his grace (*nadar*).

4. The master of the three worlds, the beloved spouse is in his high abode. I am struck with awesome wonder to see his qualities revealed through the soundless word. By reflecting on the word and through good conduct we receive the document of the name of Ram. Without the name we have no authorization and we find no place; the precious name is the only authentic document (*nīsān*). Through this perfect document (*pūrā parwāna*) one receives perfect honour and perfect wisdom, and one ceases to come-and-go. Nanak, one recognizes the eternal Lord by turnig to the *guru*.

XIX

1. The young maiden has just come to the pasture (*goil*). She has put down the pitcher from her head and she is attached to the Lord. Attached to the Lord in the pasture

she adorns herself with *sahaj* and the word. With folded hands she prays to the *guru* to unite her with the true one. Considering the love and devotion of the woman, the beloved friend (*pritam*) has rid her of lust and anger. Nanak, the young and beautiful maiden meets the beloved spouse and leans on him.

2. Newly wedded to the true one, you young innocent maiden, do not go anywhere else now and remain with your spouse all the time. I am a slave to my spouse (*nah*) and I love to devote myself to the Lord. One should sing praises of the ineffable Lord and consciously reflect on the unfathomable. The name of Ram is the true source of pleasure and he meets those who are devoted to truth. They who receive the gift of the word, Nanak, they are enabled to reflect and understand.

3. She who is imbued with the love of the Lord sleeps with the beloved spouse. Walk as the *guru* desires in association with the true one. In association with the true one the woman sleeps with her Lord in the company of her friends. With devotion to the only one and with the name implanted firmly in our hearts, we meet the Lord through the true *guru*. May not I forget the signless one (*niranjan*) at any time of the day or night, even for a moment; may I remember him with every breath I take. By the light of the word, Nanak, the destroyer of fear has lighted the lamp within me.

4. His light, my friend, is everywhere in all the three worlds. Infinite and boundless, he dwells in every heart. The true one is infinite and boundless, and he meets those who subdue their self. The word removes the dirt and burns *haumai*, greed and attachment. Go to his door so that you may see the Lord if it pleases him; only they swim across whom he enables to swim. Nanak, they who taste the nectar of the name and lodge it in their hearts do not hunger or thirst for any thing.

XX

1. I am full of zeal; imbued with truth I am in bloom. I am fascinated by the love of the beloved spouse, the eternal Lord. Unseeable, he is the Lord of lords and what

he wills comes to pass. The compassionate and merciful Lord is the life of all lives. No other knowledge, meditation or ritual for me; in me dwells the name of the Lord. I do not know any garb (*bhekh*), any pilgrimage or austerities (*hath*); I hold fast to truth, Nanak.

2. She who is imbued with truth, her nights are joyous and her days are pleasant. The love of the Lord awakens those who are asleep in their homes. The young and innocent maiden who is awakened by the word is liked by the beloved spouse. Curb your inclination to falsehood and fraud and to serve other than the Lord. The name of the Lord is my necklace, and the true word is my passport (*nīsān*). Nanak begs for truth with folded hands; be graciously kind, O' Lord, if you please.

3. Awake, you o' maiden with beautiful eyes, this is the call of the *guru's* word (*gurbānī*). The state of *nirban* is beyond description; there are only a few who attain to it by turning to the *guru*. They lose their self in the word and gain consciousness of the three worlds. They remain detached from the world; intoxicated with the love of the infinite Lord, they steadily meditate on the true one. He is everywhere, Nanak; he is within you.

4. You have been called to his abode; you must know that he loves devotion. If you take the instruction to your heart, your body blossoms. She who takes pleasure in destroying the *man* through the word comes to know the Lord of the three worlds. Her mind (*man*) never wavers or vascillates; she knows only her beloved spouse. You are my support, you are my master, and you are my strength. Nanak, the one who is attached to the true one becomes truly holy; her case is settled through the *guru's* word.

XXI

Bāramāha

17. When the true one comes and we attain *sahaj*, blessed are all the twelve months, all seasons, phases of the moon, days, hours and moments. The Lord meets those whom he loves and the task is fulfilled; the Lord knows the way in which to accomplish it. He who adorns

also loves the adorned; and he enjoys the union. Glorious is the bridal bed when the beloved spouse enjoys me, and my lot becomes auspicious when I turn to the *guru*. Nanak, the beloved friend enjoys me day and night; the eternal Lord is my spouse.

XXII

1. I am the slave of my master (*thakur*). I have grasped the feet of the Lord, the only source of life, and I have done away with self. The breath of my life is the friend who is perfect, the Primal Light and the Primal Lord. The captor (*mohan*) has captivated my heart; I know him by reflecting on the word. The self-willed (*manmukh*) is mean, shallow and false; her body and mind suffer pain. When she is imbued with the love of the joyous Lord she meditates on Ram and her mind gains steadiness.

2. Discarding *haumai* she has become a *bairāgan*, and she has gained true consciousness. Her heart is in the Lord who has no family and no material sign, and she is indifferent to social taboos.

3. There was none like you in the past and there shall be none like you in the future, my beloved friend (*pritam*); you are the basis of my life. Nanak, the *sohāgan* is imbued with the name of the Lord; he is her spouse.

XXIII

1. Why be without the Lord and afflicted with pain? Every thing loses taste without the Lord, and one suffers the dread of death. As long as the beloved friend does not show his vision I remain hungry and thirsty. The mind is at peace the moment I see him, and I blossom like the lotus in water.

2. When the low clouds thunder and rain, the peacocks and nightingales rejoice; so do trees, cattle, birds and snakes; and so does rejoice the *sohāgan* in the home of the beloved spouse.

3. The *sahaj* of the beloved spouse is not experienced by the evil woman who is dirty and ugly, and who is of evil conduct (*kulakhani*). Her tongue has not tasted the

sweetness of the love of the Lord; unsatiated, she suffers ignorance and pain.

4. Nanak, she who has received the peace of *sahaj* from the Lord and whose mind becomes steady the moment she sees the Lord, does not come-and-go; she suffers no pain, her body suffers no pain.

XXIV

1. My beloved Lord is not far. Listening to the *guru's* words I have discovered that the Lord is the basis of my life. This is how the woman meets the divine spouse, and she is loved by him. Reflection on the word and the *guru's* instruction dispel all illusions about *jātī*, *baran* and *kul*.

2. She who accepts the word loses all sense of pride and discards avarice and unkindness. The woman of the beloved spouse enjoys him in *sahaj*, adorning herself by turning to the *guru*.

3. Burn the love of family and of kith and kin which increases your attachment to *māyā*. She who does not have in her the love of the Lord remains in doubt (*dubidha*) and all her actions are useless. She who has the treasure of love within does not remain concealed. Nanak, the priceless name made manifest by the *guru* abides for ages.

XXV

1. I pray to my *guru*, the beloved friend, that he may enable me to meet the divine spouse (*Har-Var*). My mind is stilled when I hear the clouds rumbling before the rain; imbued with love of the dear Lord I sing his praises. May the cloud burst and let my mind be drenched. A drop of the pleasing nectar is in my heart and, fascinated by the *guru*, I taste the joy of the Lord.

2. She whose mind is in tune with the *guru's* words enjoys *sahaj* and she is the beloved of the spouse. Chosen by her lord the woman becomes *sohāgan*, and her body and mind enjoy the peace of love.

3. Discarding demerit, she becomes a *bairāgan* and the eternal Lord becomes her spouse. She never experiences sorrow or separation; the Lord is kind and gracious to her.

4. Not for her is coming-and-going; her steady mind takes refuge in the perfect *guru*. Nanak, meditating on the Lord's name the woman becomes a true *sohāgan*.

XXVI

1. The woman who has not tasted the joy of the love of the beloved spouse wails all the time and her body withers away. Caught in the chain of her deeds she loses all hope, and without the *guru* she falls a prey to delusion. Burst now o'cloud that my beloved spouse has come home. I am a sacrifice to my *guru*, my beloved friend, who has united me with the Lord.

2. My love for the master remains fresh all the time and I adorn myself with love every day. I am emancipated now that the *guru* has enabled me to see the Lord. This has been the fruit of loving devotion throughout the ages.

3. We are yours as the three worlds are yours; you are mine and I am yours. On meeting the true *guru* I have found the Lord who has no material sign (*niranjan*); never again shall I come to this ocean of earthly existence.

4. She has blossomed to see her beloved spouse, the Lord; this is the true *sīgār* of a woman. The name made manifest by the *guru* is her support and she has become true by attaching herself to the true Lord who has no material sign.

5. She is liberated; all her bonds are loosened by the *guru* and she has found honour through the word. Nanak, she cherished the Lord's name in her heart and she has met him by turning to the *guru*.

XXVII

1. The *chakwī* has no inclination to sleep without her love. When the sun rises and she sees it, she descends lower and lower as if to fall at its feet. One finds love when the beloved spouse desires. Such is my thirst for him that I cannot live without him even for a moment.

2. The lotus in the pool blossoms naturally when the rays of the sun reach it from the sky. If such be the love of the beloved friend within oneself, the light mingles with

the light.

3. The *chātrik* without water wails and cries 'my love, my love'. Its thirst is not quenched till the cloud rumbles and rains in all directions.

4. The fish lives and grows in water, experiencing sorrow or suffering in accordance with her past deeds. She cannot live without water even for a moment; it is a matter of life and death for her.

5. When the woman is abroad (*wāndhī*) and the beloved spouse is in the country (*des nivāsī*), she sends messages through the true *guru*. Thereby she gathers merit and the Lord manifests himself in her heart; imbued with loving devotion she attains happiness.

6. Every one cries for love, but only she who is liked by the *guru* finds love of the beloved spouse. He unites her with himself through his gracious kindness, and she lives with the true one for ever.

7. The soul in every one is the same soul; he is within every one. The inside is illumined by the *guru's* grace, and it leads to *sahaj*. O' the bestower of peace, the master of the world, it is for you to set things right; it is your own task. Through the *guru's* grace, Nanak, when the beloved spouse is found within oneself, the thirst is quenched.

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