

Thesis

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A STUDY OF THE TEACHINGS OF BĀBĀ
SAWAN SINGH IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

by

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ABSTRACT

This study centres on the teachings of Bābā Sawan Singh in the Gurmat Siddhant. Bābā Sawan Singh is a Satgurū of the Beas line of the Rādhāsoāmī movement. The Rādhāsoāmī tradition is a twentieth century manifestation of the medieval Sant tradition. The Gurmat Siddhant contains a modern day exposition of Sant Mat. The primary aim of this study is to explain and interpret the contents of the Gurmat Siddhant. In so doing Bābā Sawan Singh's brand of neo-Santism is systematically presented and the synthetic nature of his teachings revealed.

The study consists of a general introduction, eight chapters and a general conclusion. The general introduction outlines the early history of the southern and northern Sant traditions. It also characterizes the main features of the Sant belief system. The structure and content of the thesis is also outlined here. Chapter I examines the early development of the Rādhāsoāmī movement from 1878 to 1948. It analyzes the growth of the Agra and Beas camps and highlights Bābā Sawan Singh's role at Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh. Chapter II studies the concept of God in the Gurmat Siddhant. It examines Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of the divine creator and the doctrine of divine self-expression. Chapter III analyzes the cosmogony and cosmology of the Gurmat Siddhant. It provides an appraisal of Bābā Sawan Singh's interpretation of the Rādhāsoāmī scheme of creation.

Chapter IV appraises what is said about the status and role of the Satgurū. Chapter V looks at Surat Sabd Yoga as a spiritual discipline and explains its role as an instrument of spiritual salvation. Chapter VI defines the concept of bhakti in the Gurmat Siddhant. It explains how Bābā Sawan Singh perceives bhakti as a devotional response to God. Chapter VII presents a studied appraisal of the ethics of the Gurmat Siddhant. It examines the idea of the relationship between ethical values and self-transformation as perceived by Bābā Sawan Singh. Chapter VIII discusses the "unity of religions" thesis as it appears in the Gurmat Siddhant. It highlights Bābā Sawan Singh's primordialist approach to religion and examines what is said about the nature of religion. The general conclusion presents an outline of the main features of Bābā Sawan Singh's thought as discussed in the main chapters. It also develops a perspective regarding Bābā Sawan Singh's neo-Sant syntheticism.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE SANT TRADITION : AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

The devotional transformation of medieval Hinduism was largely influenced by the rise of the bhakti movement. It was a prominent feature in the history of Indian religion. It began in the in the Tamil South (1) and gradually spread northward through Karnataka and Mahārāshtra. It also swept over North India and Bengal from the fifteenth century onward. This impulse toward a personal devotional faith profoundly changed both the quality and the structures of Indian religious life. The heart of religion became the cultivation of a loving relationship between the individual and a personally conceived supreme God. Salvation was once considered unattainable except by men of the three upper castes. It now came to be seen as the prerogative of all. Spiritual leadership shifted from the Brahmin priest knowledgeable about ritual and Sanskrit scriptures to the figure of the popular poet-saint who communicated with the masses in the vernacular. (2)

The bhakti movement was an expanding movement vitalized by leaders who generated new ideas. This movement reached its zenith between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century. The bhakti tradition is an ongoing one. It is till very much alive today, permeating all facets of Hindu religious life. The songs of the poet-saints, their adaptations of Sanskrit religious texts, their sayings and the legends

of their lives remain the "classics" of the different vernacular literatures. These also serve as the principal source of religious inspiration for most ordinary worshippers. Many of the current practices of popular Hinduism have their origin in the bhakti movement. In addition, most of the organized religious communities that evolved out of the followings of particular poet-saints or groups of poet-saints continue to exist in independent traditions with their distinctive patterns of belief and practice. Above all, it is the ideas and attitudes of the bhakti movement that live on, giving present-day Hinduism its emotional texture, its spiritual and social values, and its basic philosophical assumptions.

Some scholars have chosen to compare the bhakti movement to the Protestant Reformation of Christianity. (3) Both these movements demonstrate a similar diversity. Though the poet-saints were kindred spirits moved by similar devotional fervour, the expression of their devotion took a variety of forms. Some poets were devoted to Śiva, others to Viṣṇu or one of his incarnations. Yet others worshipped a supreme God transcending all concrete manifestations. Besides differing in the object of their devotion, the poet-saints and the movements they inspired also espoused a wide range of philosophical positions. These ranged from strict dualism to the absolute monism of Advaita Vedānta. At the level of doctrine and social ideology, there were varying degrees of opposition and accommodation to the orthodox tradition's insistence on the revealed status of the Vedic scriptures, the priestly role of the Brahmins, and the observance of

caste duties and restrictions. In matters of devotional practice, the rejection of all external forms of worship is often encountered.

Indeed it is customary to discuss the bhakti movement from an overall perspective. One tends here to stress its underlying unity (4) and also the role of the poet-saints as religious and cultural integrators. (5) It is however, more appropriate to conceive of the movement as a cluster of individual bhakti groups, each with its particular emphases. (6) These groups display a strong character. They are distinguished not only by their doctrinal content but by their separate histories. Thus, under the rubric of bhakti, one finds a variety of different traditions. There are the orthodox Śrī Vaiṣṇava and the Śaiva Siddhānta schools of the Tamil South, the non-conformist Virāṣaivas of Karnataka, the worship of the goddess Kālī in Bengal and the widespread North Indian Rāmā cult. Besides these groups we also have the exclusively Kṛṣṇaite sects of Vallabha in Western India and Caitanya in Bengal. Finally, we have the Sant tradition. This study focuses on the teachings of a representative of the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. This tradition is often viewed as a twentieth century expression of the medieval Sant tradition.

The Sant. Etymological Considerations

There are differences of opinion, both among Sant scholars and within the Indian Bhakti tradition itself, regarding the Sant tradition. The difficulty begins with the term Sant which has several overlapping

meanings. The term is derived from from the Pālī term sānta. (7) In Hindī it is used as the singular form of the Sanskrit sat (truth, reality). Its root meaning is "one who observes 'śuddha astitva'" (8) (pure way of being) and has achieved a state of spiritual enlightenment by experiencing mystical reality. By extension it is also used to refer to all those who sincerely seek enlightenment. (9) Within the tradition itself the term Sant is used as a synonym for sādḥ or sādḥū in the original sense of one who controls the senses. This is opposed to the common modern usage of sādḥū meaning an itinerant religious medicant. (10)

An examination of the Puñjābī usage of the term Sant will inevitably take us back to the writings of the Sikh Gurūs. (11) Early Sikh religion already mentions men called Sants. For the Sikh Gurūs, the term Sant designates any seeker after truth and salvation who pursues his objective by means of a particular range of activities. (12) The word recurs frequently in the Ādi Granth. (13) It is, however, by no means the only term used by the Gurūs nor has it proved to be the most durable. In Sikh usage, the most popular of the several synonyms has been the word which tends to be overlooked by reason of its subsequent dominance - the word Sikh. In the works of the Gurūs, Sikh and Sant are normally interchangeable. The meaning which they express is also covered by several other terms. These include gurmukh, sādḥ, sādḥū, bhagat, sevak, sachīārā, brahmā giānī and gursikh. In this assembly Sant, which modern commentators (14) believe to be synonymous with the terms already mentioned, takes its place as an important word, but certainly not one possessing a unique meaning or importance. (15)

This contrasts somewhat with the more exalted place which the term Sant holds in Hinduism. It is also reasonable clear that in terms of Sikh organizational ideals (*khālsā*, *panth*, *saṅgat*), the Hindu Sant is incongruent with the more tightly organized and self-consciously communal nature of Sikh social and religious life. However, within the larger Sikh tradition, a number of Sant-centred panths have arisen, the Nānak-panth being the central and most important. (16)

Historically there has been a tendency among established Sant scholars to perceive the term as a designation given to poet-saints belonging to two distinct though related devotional bhakti groups. The first is that of a particular group of non-sectarian Vaiṣṇava bhaktas devoted to Vithoba or Vithalla, the famous deity of Pandharpur. This group is known as the Vārkarīs of Mahārāshtra who flourished from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. The second group spanned the Hindi-speaking areas of Puñjāb and Rajasthan. It was active from the fifteenth century onward. It was a loose fellowship of believers in the supreme God conceived as nirguṇa (beyond all qualifications). Rejecting all saṅguṇa (qualified) manifestations of the Divine, the North Indian Sants defy classification within the usual categories of Hindu bhakti. It has become customary, however, to describe them as proponents of nirguṇa bhakti - a rather unhappy appellation as Barthwal (17) and McLeod (18) have argued.

The Sants and Nirguna Bhakti

The concept of nirguna bhakti as a distinct devotional mode contrasting with that of the Sants as a separate devotional tradition, is relatively new. The idea of Sant Mat (a coherent body of Sant teachings) belonging to a Sant paramparā (a common spiritual line of descent) distinct from that of sectarian Vaiṣṇavas did not become fully crystallized until the mid-nineteenth century. It originated in certain late esoteric circles. These circles were more self-conscious about belonging to a tradition than were the earlier Sants. It has however, gained general acceptance among the members of Sant panths (Sant communities of shared belief and practice). In the past fifty years, it has also been given currency in scholarly circles, (19) replacing the older understanding of Sants as "reformed" or "syncretistic" Vaiṣṇavas. This practice of classifying forms of popular devotion, based on distinctions between nirguna and saguna, Sants and Vaiṣṇavas is not without problems. The contrast is not always as neat as the taxonomy would imply, for the following reasons.

The use of the term saguna bhakti as a blanket concept often obscures the important differences at the symbolic and affective level between the various poet-saints of the southern group (20). The same holds true for the indiscriminate use of the term nirguna bhakti. This term might be used to distinguish between the religious vision and utterances of the solitary individuals who were medieval Sants and the

doctrines and other literatures of the various organized sects or panths developed by their followers.

Another problem related to such absolute and rigid classifications becomes clearly evident when discussing organization. One might logically predict, for example, that Vaiṣṇava religious movements would have a more distinct pattern of organization than their Sant counterparts, since the community could be so directly shaped around a specifiable, saṁguṇa object of devotion like Rām or Kṛṣṇa. The fact is, however, that religious movements representing the Sant persuasion bear organizational patterns no less definite than their Vaiṣṇava counterparts. Hawley (21) for example, points out, the Dādū, Kabīr, and Nānak panths are as well articulated as the Vallabha, Gaudiya and Rādhāvallabha saṁpraydāya. Indeed, it can be said with some degree of conviction that it is the Rāmāite component of medieval bhakti, not the Sant, "that has failed more than any other to spawn clearly recognizable sectarian communities". (22)

Such difficulties of classification may, however, be perceived as fortunate. They alert us to the likelihood that the religious world in which the medieval bhaktas participated and which they so shaped was much more fluid in its organization than they are usually made out to be. To divide the principal figure of medieval India into saṁguṇa bhaktas on the one hand and Sants on the other is to run the risk of obscuring important connections that may have related them to one another and probably made them in more ways than one part of the same larger movement.

The Sants and Vaiṣṇavism

The next question which is not unrelated to the nirguṇa/saguṇa classification and which should be attended to is the Sant-Vaiṣṇavism relationship. To what extent is it justifiable to speak of the Sant paramparā as distinct from the Vaiṣṇava devotional tradition? There are clear differences between the religious outlook of the Sants and Vaiṣṇava poets. There are, however, also many points on which they coincide. The northern Sants use Vaiṣṇava names for their nirguṇa deity, while the god Vithoba of the Mahārāshtrian Sant tradition is considered to be a form of Viṣṇu. Sants also share with the Vaiṣṇavas a number of beliefs. These include the belief in divine grace and the idea that the relationship between the human soul and God is that of lover and Beloved. Then there is also the emphasis on the pain of separation as leading to spiritual enlightenment. Further to this there is the view that salvation is attainable by all castes and both sexes.

The early northern Sants, however, - and especially Kabīr - seem to have gone a step or two further than most others by actually breaking with the Brahminical tradition altogether. Kabīr does not only reject idol-worship and ridicule the vain pretensions of the Brahmins and the hypocrisy of the swāmīs and the yogīs. He and his followers do not look upon themselves as Hindus or Muslims, but reject all religions based on revelation, advocating a purer, higher form of religion which actually does away with the concept of a personal God. Kabīr sometimes adopts a monotheistic stance. However, in many of his short rhymed

verses called *sākhīs* or *pads*, he adopts a nihilistic :
utterances come nearer to the teachings of the ancient Siddhas and
Nāths, who were the propagators of the Tāntric yoga later taught by
the Śaiva Nāth yogīs. And the fact is that such utterances can hardly
be reconciled with Vaiṣṇava bhakti, for their conception of man's
relationship to God possesses a religio-spiritual context of its own.

The various elements which appear as characteristic of the Sant
religious discipline can also be traced to the Vaiṣṇava tradition. The
cult of the Name as an hypostasis of the supreme divinity, especially
that of Rām, is one example. It, however, probably owes much to the
Tāntric tradition and is present in most forms of Vaiṣṇava bhakti at
least from the time of Jñāneśvar (23). The extreme importance,
attributed to *satsang* or the "company of the saints" (24), with the
Sants themselves taking the place of the Hindu tīrthas, is commonly
held by all Vaiṣṇavas. On the other hand, the exaltation of the gurū
as the interiorized Satgurū, whose powerful mantra is conceived as
śabda or the mysterious Word is clearly a yogic concept. It is not
unfamiliar to the northern Sants who retain certain links with
traditional Vaiṣṇava bhakti. The Sant sādhanā therefore may be viewed
as a subtle blending of two main traditions of Hindu mysticism,
apparently antagonistic to each other, namely Vaiṣṇava bhakti and an
esoteric Tāntric tradition. The Sants also have some things in common
with the Islamic Sūfīs who were present in India from the twelfth
century onward and influenced the religious environment in which the
Sant tradition evolved.

Despite these important areas of commonality, however, there are significant differences as well. These differences are especially marked in the case of the northern Sants. While the Sants use Vaiṣṇava names of God, they do not worship the incarnations of Viṣṇu. Neither are they affiliated to any of the orthodox bhakti schools. They are, as earlier mentioned, also indifferent to the authority of the Vedas. Sants reject the priestly prerogatives of the Brahmins and oppose the outer forms of devotion associated with saguṇa bhakti. Finally while the orthodox Vaiṣṇava tradition has affirmed at the level of doctrine that salvation is open to all, socio-religious barriers between high and low castes have not really been challenged at the level of practice. The Sants by contrast, have been uncompromising in their opposition to caste hierarchy and exclusiveness. The great majority of the leading figures in the tradition have been from the lower castes. As a non-conformist "counter-culture" the Sants are close in spirit to certain non-sectarian movements. One could cite as examples the Bauls of Bengal, the Tamil Siddhas, the Virasāivas of Karnataka.

The historical Sant movements of North India and spiritually kindred movements elsewhere continue to function as organised religious communities in the present. Their influence however, extends far beyond them and is diffused throughout the contemporary culture of India. Their radical form of bhakti has been especially attractive to modern intellectuals and social reformers. For these individuals, an interior religion of the heart combined with ethical behavior and egalitarian social values is more attractive than highly ritualized religious practices.

The Sant Fellowship

The view that there is a certain coherent group structure among the Sants is still subject to controversy in certain scholarly circles. Daljeet Singh (25) for example, argues that there was, on the part of the Sants an identifiable lack of organizational interest of any kind. He argues that there is little evidence to suggest that the Sants themselves made any conscious attempt to form a distinct community. The Sants, he believes did not institutionalize their faith. Their aim seems to have been individual rather than social. Others like Vaudeville prefer to speak of a loose spiritual fellowship. (26) This fellowship was seen as consisting of mystical poet-saints, not easily classified either from structural, metaphysical or religious points of view. She sees the Sants as representing a type of religious attitude that had become vocal in medieval India.

Most attempts to construct a defensible history of the early Sant movement focus on the biographies of medieval figures who presaged the beginning of a new direction in Indian spirituality. Notwithstanding the importance of Mahārāshtrian and Kashmiri poets, the majority of early Sants belonged to that part of present-day India known as the Puñjāb and Uttar Pradesh. In its barest outline the formative period of the Sant movement seems to have been shaped by two different fifteenth/sixteenth figures, Kabīr and Gurū Nānak. Both these individuals have assumed legendary status in the literary and religious history of the South Asian subcontinent.

Yet despite intensive scholarly efforts neither Kabīr nor Gurū Nānak have had their status as historical figures ascertained beyond the shadow of reasonable doubt. In the case of Kabīr we find that all material used as primary evidence for reconstructing his life is set in sākhīs or dohās (short rhymed poems), the authenticity of which still remains challenged. (27) Unlike the life of Kabīr, that of Gurū Nānak may be gleaned from the janam sākhīs, prose accounts composed in Puñjābī and written in the Gurmukhī script. The language of the janam sākhīs however, is both inflated and opaque. This has forced scholars like McLeod (28) to adopt a set of internally consistent criteria for separating true from false passages. Added to this problem is the fact that the janam sākhīs were all composed within the Sikh community for the benefit of Gurū Nānak loyalists. This makes them highly unsatisfactory as historical sources from the scientific point of view because they run the danger of being "distorted by legendizing propensities". (29) Given such methodological problems related to the reconstruction of quasi-historical biographies, scholars like Lawrence bemoan the fact that the Sants "will never be knowable as a historical reconstructable body of persons." (30) Nevertheless there is still sufficient room for presenting defensible arguments that support the contention that the Sants can be perceived as and grouped into loosely knit paramparā or lineage structures (31) or sampradāya or traditions (32). These are based on the following observations relating to the group structure.

The concept of an organic relationship between gurū and disciple is a tenable one. In the Hindu tradition there is a belief that spiritual

power is continuous, flowing through established channels and specific mediating sources, the gurū being one of these. Amongst the early Sants and their present-day counterparts the Satgurū-disciple relationship is one that enjoys the status of indestructable permanence. This identification of the disciple with his gurū and/or his lineage possesses an important socio-religious dimension and is prominently reflected in the Sant doctrine of gurū bhakti.

Most Sants sing of the Satgurū in terms which seem very human. But which Sants normally did have a living person in mind when they so sang is not always clear. Particularly problematic in this respect are the well-known early Sants, most of whom are sources of significant lineages. Western scholars today usually see the Satgurū referred to by Kabīr, Gurū Nānak and Dādū as bearing little reference to any one living person. Indian scholars, generally tend to think otherwise.

(33) The earliest Sants did not seem to have maintained extended contact with individual perceptors of their own. However, in singing as they did of the Lord as Satgurū, they were, no doubt consciously offering themselves to be taken in place of traditional objects of worship they are often seen as rejecting.

The tradition takes a significantly different form with the first several successors of well-known Sants. Aware of the Satgurū as also a unique individual at hand, their references to him seem more patently human. They sometimes sing of the paradoxes involved in devotion to a living person. While retaining a significant awareness of a larger Sant clan, these figures, many illustrious in their own right, also

saw their own status as gurūs deriving largely from the fact of their lineage. This development differs significantly from that seen in the relatively lineageless early Sants. This particular notion of lineage is best illustrated by presenting briefly the Rādhāsoāmī movement's own genealogy of Sants.

The modern Rādhāsoāmī movement provides its own genealogy of "perfect and true Saints". (34) The lineage includes Kabīr, Gurū Nānak, Paltū, Dādū, Raidās, Tulsi Sāhib, Jagjiwan Sāhib, Gharib Dās, Tulsi Dās, Nabha Jī, Swāmī Hardās and Sur Dās. Among the Muslims represented are Shams Tabriz, Maulānā Rūmī, Hafiz and Muhaddid Alif Sanī. (35) One therefore sees here that the idea that there are a Sant tradition is a very real proposition. It is a fact that it is to the benefit of such movements as Rādhāsoāmī, which postulate connections to the Sant tradition for their legitimacy, that such a tradition in fact existed. In fact there are claims that the term "Sant Mat" originated from Tulsi Sāhib (36), a saintly figure who immediately preceded the origins of Rādhāsoāmī in the mid-nineteenth century.

And finally, the accepted fact that modern day Sants constantly draw upon the Sant bānī (a collection of short spiritual verses by leading Sant figures), seems to point to the fact that there is a pool of writings from a common body of revered Sants. One could even propose the notion of a clan of Sants. The idea here is that of a fellowship of Sants whose body of independent verses were in the course of time gathered together as collections and revered as syntheses of Sant ideas.

Both the Sikhs and the Dādū-panthīs have put together from the sayings of a number of Sants, compilations which have been given special canonical status. The Ādi Granth for instance, contains all verses of the Sikh Gurūs and selections of verses of other poet-saints. (37) The Pañchvānī collections of the Dādū-panthīs represent an attempt to gather together all the so-called "genuine" verses of Dādū, Nāmdev, Kabīr, Haridās and Raidās. These have for whatever reasons, been singled out within the tradition as being particularly their own. The Sarvāngī (another Dādū-panthī collection) on the other hand, represents an attempt by Rajab, an important disciple of Dādū, to cull out of the entire Sant tradition a number of verses he felt were particularly important for understanding specific topics.

There are also more contemporary collections like Sant sangrah and Santon kī bānī (38) published by two different Rādhāsoāmī groups. Sant sangrah was compiled in two volumes by Rāi Sālig Rām the first Satgurū of the Agra line of the Rādhāsoāmī movement and contain verses from Shiv Dayāl Singh, the founding Satgurū of the Rādhāsoāmī movement. It also contains verses from Kabīr, Gurū Nānak, Palṭū and Tulsi Sāhib. Santon kī bānī is published by the Beas Satsaṅg of the Rādhāsoāmī movement and bears the name of Charan Singh, the present Satgurū at Beas, as author. This work presents verses by Kabīr, Palṭū, Tulsi Sāhib and a great deal from the Sikh scriptures. These verses are often taken as the basis for the Satgurū's public discourses and are presented as works that shed great light on the teachings of the Sants.

Addressing themselves to the common folk either in a rough form of archaic Hindī (39), in the case of the early northern Sants, or in archaic Marathi (40) in the case of their early southern counterparts, and some other languages including English in the case of the more contemporary movements like Rādhāsoāmī, the Sants express themselves predominantly in the language of the people.

For the most part, the spread of the early Sant tradition corresponded to the areas where Kharī bolī (41) is understood by large portions of the population (i.e. Hindustan and Mahārāshtra). (42) It is a fact that few early Sant texts show consistent Kharī bolī forms. Many do seem to show a Sant's own language oriented toward the widely understood Kharī bolī norm. This make do idiom does not usually provide smooth reading but it does indicate something about the early Sants purpose of composition. The orientation of the language of many early Sants toward a workaday idiom not only reflects their disregard for literary polish but also their intention of reaching a popular audience. Their sayings took the form of short utterances. In the North, these were dohās (distichs) or pads (short rhymed poems with a refrain). (43) The dohās of the early North Indian Sants (44) are almost always referred to as sākhīs. (45) The Bānī of the early Sant is classified into sākhī and śabda, terms that appear to have been originally used as synonyms. By the late fourteenth century, when the early Sants began to preach their form of nirguṇa bhakti, the dohā was already established in the literary tradition of the Hindī area. Not only in Apabhraṃśa (46) but also in medieval Hindī was the dohā the most commonly used metre. As the bhakti movement and its various

formations spread over North India, it might have been expected that all bhakti poets would utilize the dohās as the vehicle of their teachings. This never happened, because it tended to remain the special province of the nirguṇa Sants. It never became an important genre of either Rāmāite or Kṛṣṇāvaite bhakti. (47)

The Sant paramparā is usually divided into two main groups; that of the South and that of the North. In the case of the southern Sant tradition we have all the Marathi-speaking poets of the Vithoba (48) cult. Those following their teachings have been integrated since the thirteenth century into a single panth, called the Varkarī. The Varkarīs recognize a succession of some fifty poet-saints over a period of five hundred years. The lives of these Sants are recorded in a standard hagiographic work of the eighteenth century. Among them, the four most important are Jñāneśvar (Dyandeo) Nāmdev, Eknāth and Tukārām.

The Southern Sant Tradition

Jñāneśvar (1275-1296) (49) who is usually credited with founding the panth was also the author of several works. (50) The most well-known of these are the Gītāgovinda which are allegorical descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's love for Rādhā. But it is for the Jñāneśvarī (51) that he will always be remembered. This contribution, often hailed as the greatest mystical work in Marathi mystical philosophy is essentially an expositional work laid down in its prototype, the Bhagavad Gītā. There

is no question that this highly popular religious text is the basis of the bhakti tradition in Mahārāshtra. This tradition, although it has no formal overall organization, could properly be called a bhakti movement in its own right. (52)

Nāmdēv (1270-1350) (53), the details of whose life still remain a mystery, (54) is reputed to have travelled in North India, especially in the Puñjāb. He is said to be the author of the hymns in old Hindī preserved in the Adi Granth under his name. It is generally accepted that Nāmdēv's works roughly coincide with three eras of his life; youth, when he was an idol worshipper, middle age when he was emancipating himself from popular religious notions and practices and old age when he began to exhibit ideas compatible with those of the Sants. The primary emphasis of his mature years can be seen in the insistence on the futility of idolatry, the significance and the efficacy of the divine name. There was also the emphasis on the importance of the Satgurū and the idea of love as the appropriate response to divine initiative.

He is said to have been responsible for the idea of the company of Sants, a pantheon of Sants who knew each other and the Sants of the past. Zelliott (55) records that Nāmdēv is believed to have known a multitude of fellow Sants from all walks of life and all castes who joined in the worship of Vithoba in his life time.

Eknāth (1548-1600) was a Brahmin who hailed from the old capital of Paithan and lived during the time of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate. (56) He

lived in a highly orthodox and closed Brahminical world. Despite this he managed to maintain contact with foreigners, the non-Sanskritic community, indeed all manner of men. Eknāth exhibited a profound devotion for the lowly. His insistence on using Marathi instead of Sanskrit combined with his unorthodox behaviour of performing charitable acts for all meant that he often lived under persecution and the threat of excommunication. (57)

Eknāth is one of the four major figures in the seven hundred year old bhakti tradition of Mahārāshtra and is often considered a link figure in many ways. He is thought to have revitalized the bhakti movement of the thirteenth century. He thus paved the way for one of the greatest of Sant poets, Tukārām, in the seventeenth century. He is also seen as having served as a link to bhakti in North India by including Kabīr and Raidās in his listing of Sants as they were an intrinsic part of his own tradition.

The Eknāth Bhāgavata, the Marathi commentary on the eleventh Skhanda of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (58) is considered to be Eknāth's most important work but a listing of his other translations and commentaries are necessary to establish his scholarly character. Eknāth composed the Bhāvārtha aramayana, a Marathi version of the Vālmīki Rāmāyana. He also wrote the Chatusloki Bhāgavata, a commentary on the second Skhanda of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, a philosophical work called the Hastamalaka and a number of other highly philosophical works. He is also said to have written some four thousand Marathi

devotional abhangs (short lyrics) which are traditional forms of Mahārāshtrian sant-kavi (59) songs.

Tukārām (1598-1649) (60), was a Maratha by caste. He is not only the most beloved Sant in the Vārkanī-panth but by far the most important poet of the entire period in the minds of modern readers of Marathi literature. (61) For his poetic genius he has sometimes been called the "Robert Burns of India" and has to his credit some four thousand five hundred poems. These not only contain spiritual wisdoms for the everyday man but more importantly portray the various levels of spiritual experience. These range from the initial, elementary piety of the simple Hindu to the sublime mystical experience of the personal God in union of love and surrender. (62)

Central to any meaningful discussion of Tukārām is an explanation of the often misunderstood and sometimes oversimplified relationship between his idol worship and his mysticism (63). The seemingly insoluble riddle presented by the various elements in Tukārām's belief as regards idols is perhaps brought nearest to a solution by some Tukārām scholars. They discuss how Vithoba had come to embody for Tukārām the conception of God as the motherly Divine Being. (64)

It is by his mystic vein, found in so many of his poems that Tukārām makes a religious contribution of enduring value. Though his mysticism is often in rough and uncouth phrases and often in a terminology tinged with idolatry, it was always religious passion of the noblest kind. Tukārām taught his fellow-men not chiefly by what he said, but

by what he felt and experienced - moments of aspiration, conflict and communion.

The Northern Sant Tradition

The Sant tradition of the North presents a more fragmented picture. Instead of a single panth there are many, each with its separate history going back to a particular figure. In addition to this, there are a large number of Sants who were neither founders of panths nor affiliated to any panth, but are still regarded as being part of the tradition. What binds the North Indian Sants together is neither a historical connection nor an institutional focus, but the similarity in their teachings. The fact that they themselves perceived this commonality is clear from the numerous references in their poetry to both the Sants as a spiritual fellowship and to specific historical Sants. Not only this, but one of the major genres of North Indian Sant literature is anthologies compiled from the utterances of different Sants. The most important of these have achieved canonical status. Despite the institutional fragmentation, there is thus a strong sense of spiritual unity.

Vaiṣṇava hagiographical tradition is unanimous in making Rāmānand the founder of the northern paramparā. This is done by trying to establish the connection through Kabīr who, it is claimed, received the name of Rām from Rāmānand by way of initiation. (65) Recent scholarship however, has tended to doubt this whole interpretation of the origins

of the northern Sants. It is rejected, first of all, on chronological grounds. It is simply not possible for Rāmānand to have had all the disciples attributed to him. (66) Secondly, it is pointed out, nowhere in the preserved utterances of the early Sants is there any mention of Rāmānand or any other human gurū. Instead the Sants appear as independent figures whose spiritual awareness is based on personal mystical experience alone.

Kabīr, Gurū Nānak and Dādū are the major figures of the northern Sant tradition in its formative years. (67) The panths they founded or inspired are also the oldest surviving Sant communities today. The Sikh community is by far the most important. It has a distinct religious way of life, distinct not only from the Hindu, but also from its Sant origins. The Kabīr-panth, is currently estimated to have around two and a half million followers. It is active in several areas, particularly Madhya Pradesh and eastern Uttar Pradesh, as a religious community of the dispossessed. The Dādū-panth, numerically less strong than the other two panths, is nevertheless influential in Rajasthan.

As one of the principle figures in both Hindī literature and the Sant movement, Kabīr has been subject to considerable scholarship in India as well as in the West. (68) The background and structure of Kabīr's thought has already been well analyzed by Vaudeville. She demonstrates how Kabīr borrows from the Nāth, Vaiṣṇava and Sūfī traditions. Besides outlining instances where the strong influence of Nāth terminology and thought structures are clearly discernable, we also

learn from Vaudeville about Kabīr's debt to the Vaiṣṇava bhakti. This is evident in his use of marital imagery when talking of the seekers yearning for God. We also learn of Kabīr's renunciation, in true Sant style of all that is mechanical and external, affirming as valid only that which may be experienced inwardly. Kabīr teaches that within a man's soul, God may by his grace reveal himself to him who is prepared for the revelation. The way of preparation is the way of love, a love addressed directly to the supreme Lord who is both transcendent and immanent. It is a love which will inevitably involve long periods in the anguish of separation. Kabīr warns that few will have the courage to undertake it and fewer still the persistence to follow it to the point of revelation.

There is inevitably much that must remain obscure in Kabīr's attempts to describe his mystical experiences, which Kabīr reminds us are ultimately inexpressible. In his efforts to impart some of his mystical experiences Kabīr has frequent recourse to monistic terminology. But he uses it in a sense of his own. Monistic concepts certainly feature in his works. It is clear however, from the nature of his relationship with God that his thought must be recognized as monotheistic, not monistic. (69) Finally it is to be stressed that the works of Kabīr represent a highly personal record of an individual experience. They nevertheless place him within the framework of Sant beliefs.

Gurū Nānak's teachings revolve ultimately on the question concerning the ultimate purpose of all life and religion. It is set forth as a

union with God through the indwelling Name, an inward union which imparts eternal bliss. He teaches that the seeker who recognizes this, who accepts the proffered means and so attains such union, transcends the karmic cycle. In so doing the seeker is said to pass into a condition of beatitude, infinite, eternal and ultimately inexpressible.

This perception, however, can have meaning only in the light of a developed understanding of what might be termed Gurū Nānak's theology. Theology seems the appropriate term here, for the whole of Gurū Nānak's thought revolves around his understanding of the nature of God. This theology is not, of course set out in any systematic form. Gurū Nānak's writings bear witness to his experience of God. Gurū Nānak did not set out his beliefs in an integrated pattern for his was essentially a religion of experience. The fact that his thought is not set out systematically does not mean that it is inconsistent. (70) On the contrary, one of the great merits of Gurū Nānak's thought is its very consistency.

The only early reference to Dādū, outside the literature of the Dādūpanth (71) is found in a Persian work, (72) written by an unknown Muslim writer about sixty years after the death of the great Akbar, in about A.D. 1665. For three centuries the collected hymns and poems of Dādū known as the Dādū Gānī (73) or Oracles, existed only in manuscript form. Owing to its sacrosanct character the volume was not readily accessible. Outside the immediate circle of Dādū's followers it was comparatively unknown. With the last half-century a change has

taken place. A number of more or less reliable texts have been published (74). Today the Bānī commands a considerable body of readers who have no formal connection with the Dādū-panth.

The Bānī deals with a number of themes. These include those pertaining to the role of the Satgurū, the importance of the practice on Nām simran, the idea of inward devotion, love of God and anti-scriptural sentiments. The thirty seven chapters of the Bānī present the teachings of a North Indian Sant in the form of a mystical protest. From the Bānī it appears that Dādū condemned and rejected the exterior religious practices of both Islam and Hinduism. He rejected the Quran and Vedas as revealed truths. He also bitterly attacked the corrupt and hypocritical Brahmin priesthood. He held that Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahma were no more than men who had been canonized. Like Kabīr he declared that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, but a lover of God. He called God the "Divine Teacher" and the "Deliverer". (75)

The nineteenth century proved for all the religious traditions in India to be an age of rationalistic reform. During this period attempts were undertaken to systematize beliefs and make beliefs consistent with practices. It was during this period that we see the emergence of Tulsī Sāhib (ca. 1760-1843). He is considered by some to be the certain heir to modern Sant tradition and a precursor of the new spirit. He stressed the unity of Sants as a paramparā and taught what he believed to be the common core of doctrines implicit in all Sants (Sant Mat). Heavily indebted to him was Shiv Dayāl Singh (1818-1878), founder of the modern Rādhāsōmī movement. This movement

regards itself as the main repository of the heritage of the Sants. It proclaims itself to be the twentieth century manifestation of Sant Mat. It is with the teachings of one of the Satgurus of this movement, namely Sawan Singh that we shall be dealing with later on in this study.

The Sant Belief System

When speaking of common Sant elements it is safer to speak of Sant ideas rather than a common Sant style. Though often presented as unrelated and unsystematic, Sant ideas, however, taken as a whole could be perceived as a distinct style of religious expression. Being acutely aware of the complexity and vastness of the subject, our treatment of the Sant belief system will of necessity be selective. We will concentrate mainly on the beliefs of the early Sants. We hope to demonstrate that the Sants participated in a certain common kind of religious response to the sacred.

The early northern and southern Sants differ in metaphysical views. Kabir and Dadu exhibit strong traits of monotheism and some forms of pantheism.

The southern group represented by Namdev and his Maharashtrian counterparts cling to a purified form of Vaisnavism which implies a permanent love relationship between the soul and God. Both groups however, agree on the method of achieving spiritual salvation. Whether Saivite, Vaisnavite or Muslim, all Sants stress the necessity

of devotion to and practice of the divine Name. They also stress devotion to the Satgurū and the significance of satsang. These are the pillars of the Sant belief system.

Traditional Hinduism conceives God (or gods) as endowed with both name and form (nāma-rūpa) as objects of devotion. The Sants reject the form aspect and cling to the sole Name as the hypostasis of the supreme Being. The form of prayer advocated is sumiran (smarana). (76) This is a practice common to all Hindu mystical traditions that attribute great potency to certain words. It is taken to mean "the remembrance of the holy Name of God". It can be done verbally (jap) with the tongue or by "unlettered prayer" (ajāpājap) (77) - mental concentration beyond all cerebral representation.

By rejecting as they do the plurality of gods as well as the Vaiṣṇava doctrine of the avatārs of the supreme Lord, the Sants appear as seekers of the Absolute. He is thought of as the Godhead. This notion of the supreme Being tends to deny the distinction between the soul and God and urges man to recognize within himself his true divine nature. This monistic view of salvation as a total merging of the finite soul into God however, does not always represent the prevailing view of the Sants as a whole. Most of the Sant's speak of a union with, rather than merging into, God.

The assertion of qualified monotheism which characterizes Sant Mat as a whole ought to be qualified in connection with the religious attitudes of the southern Sants. They do not hesitate to worship

the "body" of Vithalla, which they recognize a manifestation of the eternal Godhead. Yet, as a whole, in spite of their ardent devotion for the visible Vithoba, the southern Sants and their descendents tend towards monotheistic type of bhakti, which is essentially the bhakti of love or prema bhakti. For the Sants of the southern group, prema bhakti is to be experienced as loving tender devotion for Lord Vithoba, who is seen as the divine Mother and often addressed in the feminine form. The relationship between the Mahārāshtrian Sant and his Lord is that of a child to his mother or father.

In the case of the northern Sants God is symbolized as the Beloved, Master or husband, and the human soul pining for union with God, the inaccessible, though ever-present spouse. The religious utilization of love symbolism, implying an analogy between human and divine love, is commonly viewed as a distinct feature of all Sant poetry. The proliferation of prema bhakti literature among all northern Sants, especially from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries shows that the Sants clung to a particular form of love symbolism unknown either to the Tāntric or Buddhistic schools (78). The Sants saw the love for God as spiritual love in the Sūfī sense of the term. (79)

Along with the cult of the divine Name (80), devotion to the perfect Satgurū finds clear expression everywhere among the Sants of North India. Like many before them, (81) the Sants perceive the Satgurū as the seat of great religious mystery. He is also seen to be the sole available source of spiritual power and wisdom. The Satgurū need not

assume a human form. He is believed also to have an interiorized form which appears within. The Sants tend to divinize the Satgurū who is held to be the personification of the Word.

The term satsaṅg can be translated to mean "the fellowship of the true" or "the company of the Sants". (82) Together with the Vaiṣṇava practices of bhajan (83) and kīrtan (84) it is held by all Sants as a powerful means of purification. It is also viewed as a way of salvation and is compared to pilgrimage to Hindu tīrthas; the Sants themselves being regarded as true "living" tīrthas. (85)

The early Sant understanding of the term satsaṅg was taken to mean a meeting of the faithful. This meaning however, seems to have changed with time. The modern use of the term by contemporary Sant communities seems to point towards a fellowship. In the Rādhāsoāmī understanding of the term, for instance, a satsaṅg is defined as a fellowship with, or on behalf, of the living Satgurū. For this reason the modern day Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg, as it is officially called, might not be easily recognized as a satsaṅg by early Sant standards. (86)

Both medieval and modern day Sant poetry is characterized by its strong anti-Brahminical overtones. As Hindus, and even as Muslims, the Sants appear more or less heterodox. Insofar as orthodoxy in a Hindu context may be defined in terms of acceptance of the authority of the Vedas and the Brahminical tradition, as a whole the Sants appear as radicals. The Mahārāshtrian Sants however, appear to remain rooted within the Hindu fold. They do not formally reject the great Vedantic

tradition, the authority of the Vedas, and retain a strong link with the non-sectarian Vaiṣṇava tradition. On the other hand, the early northern Sants led by Kabīr and followed by his contemporary successors reject the Vedas altogether. At the same time they ridicule Vedic teaching, rituals and knowledge. The Muslims among them reject the authority of the Quran as well. Actually it would not be correct to say that it is the Vedas or the Quran per se that is being rejected but rather the value and status of the "Book" which in Hinduism and in Islam is perceived as the monopoly of a small group of religious clergy.

The northern Sants also deny the value of Brahminical sacrifices and rites. They scoff at the performer of Hindu rites of worship. All common practices of popular Hinduism, and those involving witchcraft and animal sacrifices or immoral practices are condemned. Most Sants passionately proclaim that man has no need for scriptures or rituals and that these are obstacles in the spiritual path of the genuine seeker. All external expressions of religious devotion are deemed irrelevant for it is only the interior of the soul which really matters. This notion of interior religion, though not exclusive to the Sants, (87) is certainly the outstanding feature of their belief system. Ritual caste barriers are also dismissed as artificial and irrelevant to the seeker of spiritual salvation. This is a stance not dissimilar to that adopted by some Buddhists. (88) Not all Sants however, display the same anti-caste sentiments as did either Eknāth, (89) Gurū Nānak or Kabīr. In Tukārām's case for example, one must proceed with extreme caution. There is nothing in his writings to

suggest that he appeared as one who took any strong line against caste prejudices. (90)

THE STUDY

Objectives of the Study

In the following paragraphs we outline the nature and scope of this study and the contributions it hopes to make.

Characteristic of the important contributions to Sant scholarship (91) is the tendency to present profiles of the environmental settings, heritage and doctrines of the Sants. The questions most frequently asked here are those pertaining to the socio-cultural history, (92) dynamics of clan and lineage formation, (93) linguistic styles, (94) social and philosophical attitudes' (95) of the various Sant movements. These complex structures are reviewed on the strength of the conviction that they undoubtedly function as a reflection of a particular spatial and temporal landscape.

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the history of the various branches of the Rādhāsoāmī movements or on the doctrines of Shiv Dayāl Singh, the movement's founder (98) and the first two Satgurūs of the Agra line. (99)

A study involving Beas branch of the Rādhāsoāmī movement has been long overdue. This study will fill a gap created by the apparent lack of scholarly efforts in this area. It will focus on the teachings of Bābā (100) Sawan Singh with particular reference to the Gurmat Siddhānt. The Gurmat Siddhānt is considered by many to be the major statement on the mystic philosophy of the Beas line.

The study will endeavour to:

throw some light on the early development of the Rādhāsoāmī movement from 1878-1948. It highlights the evolution of the movement into a tradition during the initial years after the death of Shiv Dayāl Singh.

present a detailed account of the life of Bābā Sawan Singh and his relationship to Jaimal Singh. It also examines the crucial role Bābā Sawan Singh played in the development of the Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh after 1911.

provide an exposition of the teachings of Bābā Sawan Singh in the Gurmat Siddhānt. It examines his theology, cosmology and cosmogony, his doctrine

of Satgurū, Surat Śabd Yoga, bhakti and ethics.

locate and define the "unity of religions" thesis in the Gurmat Siddhant. It focuses primarily on the essentialist position that all religions possess the same mystical core and assesses the problems such a position poses from the phenomenological and philosophical point of view.

examine a particular brand of Sant revivalism as found in the Gurmat Siddhant. It will formulate arguments about the degree and patterns of coherence with which correspondences appear between Sant teachings and those formulated by Bābā Sawan Singh.

Structure and Content of the Study

The opening chapter deals primarily with events and circumstances governing the transformation of the Rādhāsoāmī movement into a

tradition and takes into account the period between 1878-1948. It focuses on the movement's evolution during this period, characterized by its expansion, subdivision, institutionalization from the time of Shiv Dayāl Singh's death right up to that of Bābā Sawan Singh. Incorporated in this chapter is a sketch of the life and work of Bābā Sawan Singh. This life sketch is chronologically divided into three periods: 1858-1894, 1903-1911 and 1911-1948.

The first period relates to Bābā Sawan Singh's early life from the time of his birth in the Punjāb until his meeting with his Satguru Jaimal Singh in the Murree Hills in Northwestern Punjāb. It provides insights into Bābā Sawan Singh's personality, educational background and religious inclinations. It also provides brief information about his contacts with mystics and his initiation by Jaimal Singh in 1894.

The second period covers the time of his initiation until Jaimal Singh's death in 1903. It was during this time that Bābā Sawan Singh was trained as Jaimal Singh's leading disciple and successor.

The final period commences with Bābā Sawan Singh's early retirement in 1911 in order to devote his time to personal spiritual pursuits. It was also during this period that Bābā Sawan Singh found himself intensively involved with the development of Dera Bābā Jaimal Singh and the services associated with it. This period ends with his death in 1948.

Chapter II is dedicated to a study of the concept of God in the Gurmat Siddhānt. It attempts to examine Bābā Sawan Singh's theological beliefs. The analysis centres on his ideas about God as supreme creator and His relationship to the universe and the finite self. Also included is a review of Bābā Sawan Singh's listing of God's divine attributes. The chapter closes with a discussion of his doctrine of divine self-expression and the divine will.

Chapter III examines the cosmogony and cosmology of the Gurmat Siddhānt. We enquire as to what is meant by the state of the universe before creation and how it is seen as relating to the act of creation by divine self-descent. Finally, it attempts an appraisal of Bābā Sawan Singh's version of the Rādhāsoāmī scheme of creation.

Chapter IV provides the context for an understanding of how Bābā Sawan Singh expresses the idea of the absolute centrality of the Satgurū. The concept of Satgurū is profiled and evaluated before it is explained how divine status is ascribed to the Satgurū in the Gurmat Siddhānt. The significance and role of the living Satgurū will also be highlighted.

Chapter V summarizes Bābā Sawan Singh's teachings on Surat Śabd Yoga. It assesses the manner in which it is presented as a vehicle for spiritual salvation and the highest form of yoga known to man. It also explains the manner in which Surat Śabd Yoga relates to the Sant philosophy of inner religion. Finally an analysis of the various yogic techniques involved is presented.

Chapter VI studies the concept of bhakti in the Gurmat Siddhānt. It explains how the term is defined and used by Bābā Sawan Singh. Included in this chapter is an analysis of the concepts pertaining to love, longing, grace, devotion to the Satgurū, company of the faithful, gaze-fixation, service to the Satgurū, surrender and detachment. In general terms, this chapter aims to explain how Bābā Sawan Singh perceives bhakti as a devotional response to God.

Chapter VII examines Bābā Sawan Singh's system of ethical values based on his understanding of the term dharma. Attention is focussed on what is construed as "dharmic behaviour". Also examined is the concept of unregenerate man in the context of a catalogue of personal and social values drawn up by Bābā Sawan Singh in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

Chapter VIII discusses the "unity of religions" thesis as formulated in the Gurmat Siddhānt. Examined here are Bābā Sawan Singh's beliefs about the nature of exoteric and esoteric religion, the mystical core of religion, mystical communion as the ultimate goal of religion and the characteristics of the mystical experience of God. We study the problems such beliefs pose for the phenomenologist and philosopher of religion.

The general conclusion summarizes the main arguments that have defined and moulded the direction of the study. Attempts are made to focus on questions as to how spiritual truths and philosophical axioms are presented in the Gurmat Siddhānt and how these might be seen as relating to Sant doctrine. Also examined is the question of

syntheticism in the Gurmat Siddhant. It will be asked if this involves a purist intergration, a modified accomodation or a radical reinterpretation of Sant sources.

NOTES

1. It is now known that the Tamil Saivites seemed to have established themselves in India in the sixth century A.D. The great figures of Tamil Saivite literature include Tirūnanasambandar who lived in the seventh century A.D. There was also Appar who was from the same period and Tirumūlar of the eighth century A.D. Manikkavāchagar lived a century later.

Setting aside the impossible chronologies which are generally attributed to the Tamil Vaiṣṇavites, one cannot doubt that they were equally established in India along with their Saivite counterparts. Famous figures here are Nāmmalvar, whose date varies from the eighth century A.D. to the tenth century A.D. There was also his disciple Nāthamuni who lived about 1000 A.D. His grandson was Yamunācārya who lived about 1050 A.D., whose descendant was the great Rāmānuja.

2. A close relationship between bhakti saint-poets and the growth of poetic literature in the vernacular holds true for all movements except those in Tamilnadu. There didactic and heroic poetry in Tamil existed long before the seventh century bhakti poets wrote. Elsewhere either a founding saint-poet or his immediate disciples composed poetry which was among the first literature of its type in the area.

3. This comparison is attributed to Mahadeo Govind Ranade. He was a member of the reformist group. Prarthana Samaj, and a leading nationalist of 1900 India. See E. Ziellot, "Chokmala and Eknath: Two Bhakti Models of Legitimacy for Modern Change", in J. Lele, (ed.), Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements (Leiden, 1981), pp. 136-157.

4. On such study is H. H. Wilson's Religious Sects of the Hindus (Calcutta, 1958) which shows that there is an undelying unity in the bhakti movement. Wilson affords the reader a chance to glean some history and linkages of northern bhakti groups as they appear to the eye as a sort of cohesive whole.

Ziellot's study of the bhakti movement as a historically relevant phenomenon, presents the reader with a highly informative survey of the bhakti movement as a regionally oriented but cohesive whole. See E. Ziellot, "The Medieval Bhakti Movement in History", in B. C. Smith (ed.), Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religion (Leiden, 1976), pp. 143-168.

5. See V. Raghavan, The Great Integrators. The Saint Singers of India (New Delhi, 1969). This is a somewhat haphazard summary of the role of some prominent bhakti poets as cultural integrators.

6. Studies of regional bhakti groupings appear in K. McNicol, Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period (New Delhi, 1968), J. N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements (New York 1918), R. G. Bhandakar, Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems (New

Delhi, 1983) and A. Pai, Monograph on the Religious Sects in India (Bombay, 1928).

The National Book Trust, the Sahitya Academy, the Mahārāshtra Information Centre and the Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas have begun a series of monographs of a number of bhakti poets. These works are not scholarly contributions but popular summaries. They do, however, perform the welcome service of making available selected translations of some leading figures in the various regional bhakti movements.

7. See P.D. Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism (Benares, 1936), p. 1.

8. P. Chaturvadi, Uttarī Bhārat kī sant paramparā (Allahabad, 1950), pp. 3-9.

9. K. Schomer, "The Sant Tradition in Perspective", in K. Schomer and W. H. McLeod, (eds), The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition in India (New Delhi, 1987), p. 3.

The Kabīrian usage of the term Sant for example, clearly denotes the perfect man who has the experience of the Divine. It refers to one who has attained the paracā (vision) of Rām, and over whom māyā has no sovereignty. See D.C. Scott, Kabīr: Maverick and Mystic. The Religious Perceptions and Doctrines of a Medieval Indian Saint (Ph.D dissertation University of Wisconsin, 1976), p. 110.

10. W.H. McLeod, Guru Nānak and the Sikh Religion (New Delhi, 1968), p. 245.

11. See B. Labrack, "Sants in the Context of Overseas Sikh Communities", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 167.

12. These include association with other devotees (satsaṅg), regular participation in the singing of hymns (kīrtan) and the individual practice of the silent repetition of the holy Name (Nām simraṇ) and pure living.

13. All examples of the Adi Granth's use of the term are listed in Gurcharan Singh, (ed.), Adi Granth śabad-anukramnikā Vol 1 (Patiala, 1971), pp. 250-253.

14. See B. Labrack, "Sants and the Sant Tradition in the Context of Overseas Sikh Communities", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 267.

15. Twentieth century modern Sikh usage has seen a shift, in preference for the term Sikh at the cost of Sant. Reasons for such a shift are outlined in W.H. McLeod, "The Meaning of 'Sant' in Sikh Usage", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Studies of India, pp. 255-263.
16. See W.H. McLeod The Evolution of the Sikh Community: Five Essays (New Delhi, 1971). Here the author presents essays on major theological and socio-religious issues concerning the origins and historical development of the Sikhs. He also outlines the current state of research and suggests new questions and approaches.
17. The Sants not only waver between the nirguṇa and saguṇa images of the deity. They also challenge the very distinction between these categories. Barthwal recognizes that the appellation "nirguṇa bhakti" is an unhappy one. Unable, however, to come up with a suitable replacement, he settles for the term by virtue of its accepted traditional usage. See Barthwal, The Nirguṇa School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism.
18. McLeod's proposal that we substitute "nirguṇa bhakti" with "nirguṇa sampradāy" is not without problems. He himself admits that it does not accurately describe the Sant understanding of the nature of God, except in so far as it explicitly rejects the saguṇa concept of the divine avatār. See McLeod, Guru Nānak and the Sikh Religion, p. 245.
19. In the early 1930s Barthwal successfully outlined the links between "Vaiṣṇavite" Sants, and the medieval Tantric cult of the Nāths. This was followed by a number of pioneering studies in Hindi on the question of the "Vaiṣṇavism" of the early Sants. These include: H.P. Dvivedi, Nāth-sampradāy (Varanasi, 1950), P. Chaturvedi, Uttarī Bhārat kī sant-paramparā (Allahabad, 1951) and Sant sāhitya ke paramparā srot (New Delhi, 1975).
20. For an illustration, see K. Schomer, "Kabīr in the Gurū Granth Sāhib: An Exploratory Essay", in M. Juergensmeyer and N.G. Barrier, (eds), Sikh Studies. Comparative Perspectives in a Changing Tradition (Berkeley, 1979), p. 75.
21. See J.S. Hawley, "The Sants in Sur Das", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 192.
22. See note 21 above.
23. See S.V. Dandekar, Dnyanadeo (New Delhi, 1969).
24. The sat saṅgat (i.e. satsang) has antecedents in the Indian religious tradition going as far back as the Buddha. See W.O. Cole, Sikhism and the Indian Context 1469-1708 (London, 1984), p. 34.
25. See D. Singh, Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism (New Delhi, 1979), p. 166.

26. C. Vaudeville speaks of "that great spiritual family of Sants in Northern India". (Kabir Vol I I Oxford, 1974), p. 110).
27. The severity of the problem in analyzing the sākhīs of Kabir has led Vaudeville to doubt that Kabir ever composed anything of his own. Kabir's followers however, tend to argue otherwise. See Vaudeville, Kabir, Vol 1 p. 49.
28. See McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion.
29. B.B. Lawrence, "The Sant Movement and North Indian Sufis", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 362.
30. Lawrence, "The Sant Movement and the North Indian Sufis", pp. 372-373.
31. Lineage is defined here as a succession of spiritual authority through a line of gurūs. This idea is different from the broader concept of cultural tradition which in Western scholarship is used to mean a close knit identifiable community with a heritage which is distinctly its own.
32. The term tradition is a reasonably accurate rendering of the Hindu term. For a detailed analysis of the terms paramparā and sampradāya, see W.H. McLeod, "On the word panth: a problem of terminology and definition", in Contributions to Indian Sociology 12 (1978), pp. 287-295. Refer also to his essay "Kabir, Nanak and the Early Sikh Panth", in D. Lorenzen, (ed.), Religious Change and Cultural Domination (Mexico, 1981), p. 174.
33. The arguments, from Vaiṣṇava authority sometimes cited by Indian scholars to explain Kabir's relationship to Rāmānand do not always appear convincing. But the nearly universal Tāntric insistence on the necessity of a living gurū seems convincing. If the Sants' inner experience was indeed of the general Tāntric variety, then it follows that most Sants should have had significant contacts with living gurus. See McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 196-199.
34. See S. Singh (trns.), Sār Bachan (Beas, 1974), p. 46.
35. See S. Singh, Sār Bachan, p. 46. The Hindu side of the list seems more or less in line with the popular conception of the Sant tradition. Barthwal for instance, includes the first seven of the Rādhāsoāmī list in his study adding to them eleven more including Bulle Shah and Shiv Narayan. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Indian Medieval Santa Mysticism, pp. 249-269. Möller on the other hand presents a longer list, adding Mīrā Bāī, Dulam Dās and even Moin-ud-Dīn Chistī. See V. Möller, Der Rādhāsoāmī Satsang und die Mystik der Gottesknechte (D. Phil. thesis, University of Tübingen, 1956)

36. Tulsī Sāhib uses the term in his Ghaṭ Rāmāyana. The notion that he coined it is claimed by J.R. Puri and V.K. Sethi, Tulsī Sāhib. Saint of Hathras (Beas, 1978), p. 17.
37. A summarized description of the contents and structure of the Adi Granth can be found in W.H. McLeod, (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism (Manchester, 1984), pp. 4-5.
38. R.S. Rai (Huzur Maharaj), Sant sangrah. Vol. I-II (Agra, 1978), C. Singh, Santon ki bānī (Beas, 1978).
39. From a literary standpoint the term Hindi covers the western Braj Bhāsa and Khārī bolī and eastern Awadhī and Bundelī dialects. It also includes the literature of parts of Rajasthan in the west and of Bihar in the east. Braj persisted as a medium of poetry until the late nineteenth century although Khārī bolī has displaced it, hence the anomaly that the language of "modern" Hindi literature is different from that of the earlier periods. For a detailed discussion on the history and development of Hindi refer to F.E. Keay, History of Hindi Literature (New Delhi, 1982).
40. The Mahārāshtri language from which Marathi has sprung was a prākṛit, meaning a vernacular dialect and is the direct descendent of the Apabhraṃsā of Mahārāshtra. See G.A. Grierson, Linguistic Survey of India Vol 2. (New Delhi, 1973).
41. Amongst the early Sants there seems to have evolved a dialect which, with minor modifications, was used all over northern India. The basis of this dialect called Sādhukharī was Khārī bolī, the dialect spoken around Delhi. This dialect also drew on elements of old Rajasthani Braj and Mathura Pañjābī or Purvī bolī, the common tongue of what is now Uttar Pradesh.
42. The spread of the Sant tradition diminishes in areas where pride in regional language is strong, most notably Bengal, Gujarat and Kashmir.
43. The pad is a short lyric set to a rāga (musical mode) and is meant to be sung. Many pads composed by the Sants take the form of folk songs with a religio-ethical message.
44. In the South, the Marathi abhāṅgs, based on the ancient folk form known as ovi, appear as a close equivalent of the northern pad.
45. In the Sant tradition there is an important exception to this use of the term sākhī to designate utterances in the dohā form: the Sikh scriptures. In the Adi Granth we find dohās being termed saloks (Sanskrit sloka) instead. The term sākhī is used instead in connection with another scriptural genre: the hagiographical accounts of the life of Gurū Nānak, known as īanan sākhīs. For details see K. Schomer, "The Dohā as a Vehicle of Sant Teachings", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 83.

46. Apabhramśa is the collective name for the middle Indo-Aryan dialect which evolved from the various forms of prakrit between the sixth and the tenth centuries A.D.
47. It has been suggested that one of the reasons for such a development is that the dohā is primarily associated with heterodox religious traditions. This makes it uneasy for orthodox sectarian bhaktas to associate with a literary form that evolved out of a religious tradition that they felt uncomfortable with. See Schomer, "The Dohā as a Vehicle of Sant Teachings", p. 73.
48. Vithoba (Vitthal) is commonly understood to be a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa but has been often called Śiva of Pandurang.
49. For details of his life, see S.K. Belvadeo and R.D. Ranade, History of Indian Philosophy, Vol 7 (Poona, 1973), pp. 33-35.
50. These include the Abhangs, the Changadeva Pasahti (though opinions differ as to the texts' authorship) and the Amritanubhava.
51. A highly readable translation of the work one edited by H.M. Lambert, Janaeshvar Vol I-II (London, 1967-1968).
52. See E. Zelliot, "Eknath's Bhāruds: The Sant As Link Between Cultures", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 92.
53. These traditional dates have been disputed by Bhandakar. He insists that the marked differences in literary styles and idioms in the works of Jñānadev and Nāmadev indicate a period of one hundred years later for the latter. However, Scott is of the opinion that recent research by Marathi scholars seems to favour the traditional dates. See Bhandakar, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems, p. 92 and Scott, Kabir: Maverick and Mystic. The Religious Perceptions and Doctrines of a Medieval Indian Saint, p. 128.
54. A fair amount has been written in Marathi, Punjabi and Hindi on the life of Nāmadev. These accounts tend to contradict one another. Besides P. Machwa, Nāmadev. Life and Philosophy (Patiala, 1969), the only other biographical profile in English seems to be J.R. Puri and V.K. Sethi, Sant Nāmadev. His Life and Teachings (Beas, 1978). This monograph not only discusses the main events of Nāmadev's life in brief but also includes translations of his poems from the Sri Nāmadev Gāthā, the Ādi Granth and the Sat Nāmadev kī Hindī Padavali. This makes it a valuable collector's item.
55. Zelliot, "Eknath's Bhāruds: The Sant As Link Between Cultures", p. 93
56. Information on Eknāth's life is available from S. Kulkarni, Eknath (New Delhi, 1966) and G.D. Sardar, The Saint Poets of Maharashtra and their Impact on Society. (Bombay, 1969).

57. Mahipati, the eighteenth-century Sant biographer documents many of the legendary accounts of Eknath's compassion. These have been reproduced in J. Abbott and N.R. Godbole, (trns.), Mahipat Bhakta vilaya: Stories of Indian Saints by Mahipati Vol I (Poona, 1934), pp. 176-181.

58. Jñāneśvar and Eknāth are separated from each other by nearly three centuries. However, Jñāneśvar's influence upon Eknāth is so great that his Bhāgyata is seen by some as being "merely an enlarged edition of the Jñanesvari" (R.D. Ranade, Pathway to God in Marathi Literature, (Bombay, 1970), pp. 228.

59. The term sant-kavi is used by Maharashtrian literary historians to mark the entire period from the end of the thirteenth to the middle years of the seventeenth centuries.

60. Controversy still reigns with regards to Tukārām's birth date. Some Marathi authorities see it as being 1598, others in 1588, while others prefer 1568 or 1577. For a discussion relating to problems encountered in reconstructing Tukārām's biographical profile, see J.N. Fraser and J. F. Edwards, The Life and Teaching of Tukaram (Madras, 1922), pp. 76-106. Another valuable reference is J.E. Abbott, Poet Saints of Maharashtra, (Poona, 1927).

61. The Jñanesvari of Jyandev, the Eknāthi Bhāgavata and Tukārām's Abhangs are said to be the three "Bibles" of contemporary Maharashtrian bhaktas.

62. Some of Tukārām's most poignant observations concerning the necessity and value of personal spiritual experience in religion and the worthlessness of all else without it, are vividly portrayed in C. Rajwade, Tukaram, Saint of Maharashtra, (Beas, 1978), pp. 56 and 158.

63. An example of such an oversimplification of Tukārām's theism is J.D. Edwards, "Tukārām", in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol 12 (Edinburgh, 1934), pp. 466-469.

64. Fraser and Edwards, The Life and Teaching of Tukaram, pp. 152-153. Similar views on Tukārām's notion of the indwelling God are expressed in M. Dhavanony, Love of God According to Saiva Siddhānta: A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Saivism (Oxford, 1971), p. 159.

65. See W.J. Wilkins, Modern Hinduism: An Account of the Religion and Life of the Hindus in Northern India (London, 1975), p. 318. See also A. Singh, (ed.), The Ocean of Love: The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir (Sanborton, 1982), pp. xx-xxiii for a typically Rādhāsoāmi interpretation of the Kabir-Rāmānand relationship. Here the existence of such a relationship is uncritically accepted as a matter of fact.

66. The conventional list of Rāmānand twelve chief disciples and apostle include the names of Anantaananda, Sukhananda, Surasurananda, Narahirayananda, Pipā, Kabir, Bhaavananda, Senā, Dhana, Rai Dās, Padmavati, and Surasari. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry: An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, pp. 249-269

67. Little is known about the very earliest northern Sants and the predecessors and contemporaries of Kabīr like Sena, Pipā Dhanna. Though the period in which Kabīr, Gurū Nānak and Dādū flourished was the most creative phase of the northern Sant paramparā, the tradition began to expand during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It brought forth figures like Malukdās (1573-1671), Prannath (1617-1693), Jagjivan Dās (1669-1760), Charan Dās (1702-1781) and Paltū Sāhib. Both of these groups of early Sants have yet to be studied in depth. However, Barthwal and Macauliffe have contributed somewhat to over-viewing their histories and interrelationships. See M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion. Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors Vol 5 (New Delhi, 1963), pp. 84-122, Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, pp. 262-266. As far as Paltu Sahib is concerned, I.A. Ezekiel's Saint Paltu. His Life and Teachings (Beas, 1978) is a welcome contribution, considering the fact that English works on this Sant are rare.

68. There has been much produced on Kabīr but the quality varies highly. The most influential Hindi monograph on Kabīr is H.P. Dvivedi, Hindī Sahitya ki-Bhūmika (Bombay, 1963). There are a number of scholarly versions of Kabīr's verses. P. Tivari, Kabīr Granthāvalī, (Allahabad, 1961) is authoritative but limited. S. Singh, Kabīr Bīlak (Allahabad, 1972) has too many printing errors to be considered a reliable critical edition. Vaudeville, Kabīr Vol 1 presents extensive and important treatments of the cultural-historical context, the textual tradition, and Kabīrian scholarship. L. Hess, The Bīlak of Kabīr (Berkeley, 1983) examines Kabīr's poetry as religious rhetoric. Both offer eminently readable translations of his verses: Vaudeville from Tivari's text and Hess from Singh's text.

69. We disagree with K. Sharma, Early Indian Bhakti with special reference to Kabīr (Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1964), who interprets Kabir's "theology" as being wholly monistic.

70. Scholars like N. McNicol, Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period seem to have misunderstood Gurū Nānak's style when levelling accusations of inconsistency against him.

71. The main source of reference regarding the life of Dadu (1544-1603) is the Dādū jamma līlā written by his disciple Janagopal soon after Dādū's death. The first known account about the Dādū-panth by a Western author is Wilson, Religious Sects of the Hindus, pp. 57-58. For a critical appraisal of the sources for the biography of Dādū and the history of the Dādū-panth, in which some revealing conclusions are arrived at refer to, W.M. Callewaert, "Dadu and the Dadu-Panth: The Sources", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, pp. 181-189.

72. The Dabistān-i-Mazāhib notes that:

Dadu was by birth a naddef
(cotton-carder) and lived
at Naraina, one of the towns
at Marwar. He adopted the

ascetic life in the name of
the Emperor Akhbar and forbade
the practice of idolatory and
prohibited the eating of flesh.

(Quoted in W.G. Orr, A Sixteenth
Century Indian Mystic.
[London, 1947], p. 47)

73. The Bānī falls into two broad divisions:

1) The Sākhi ("witness") consists of between two thousand to three thousand rhymed couplets divided into thirty seven āngas (chapters), varying in length from ten or fifteen to nearly two hundred verses.

11) The Sabda ("word"), consisting of nearly four hundred and fifty hymns and short poems composed in a variety of well-known verses and arranged according to the particular tune in which they are sung.

74. The first printed edition of Dādū's work appeared in 1964 followed in 1906-1907 by the appearance of a complete text of the Bānī in two volumes by S. Dvivedi, published by Koshi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi. Since then a number of readable translations or part translations have appeared in English. The most popular of these are T. D. Gairola, Psalms of Dadu (Benares, 1929), K.N. Upadhyaya, Dadu The Compassionate Mystic (Beas, 1979). A comprehensive Dādū bibliography appears in V. Sharma, Sant Kavi Dādū aur Unkā Panth (New Delhi, 1969), pp. 3-7.

75. See J. Traill, "Dādū, Dādūpanthīs", in The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol 4 (Edinburgh, 1935), pp. 385-386.

76. Smāraṇa forms part of the nine marks of bhakti enumerated in the Bhāgavad Purāṇa (7.5 - 22.23). In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (7.8), it is stated that the repetition of the divine Name brings delivery from all sins.

77. According to Rajab (a disciple of Dādū) ājāp involves the physical body and the internal sound. (Sarvāṅgi Āṅga 19, Sākhi 19) and he who practices it has his "whole soul lighted up". (Sarvāṅgi Sākhi 2). Barthwal however, is mistaken when he attributes nāma simran to the ājāpājap of Gorakhnāth which takes into account breath control, (Gorakhsapaddhati, pp. 22 -23). It is this Tāntric practice of the Nāths that is ignored by most Sants who pay no attention to the breathing techniques. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, p. 295.

78. See C. Vaudeville, "Evolution of Love Symbolism in Bhagavatism", in Journal of the American Oriental Society 82 (1967), pp. 31-40 where this is clearly indicated.

79. See, Lawrence, "The Sant Movement and North Indian Sufis", pp. 367-375 for an exposition of thematic and symbolic correspondences

that exist between Ṣufī and Sant mystic love poetry. Lawrence highlights the equivalence between the Sanskrit word "viraha" and the Arabic "īshq".

80. For an elaboration of the many actual names by which the Sants address their supreme Lord, see C. Vaudeville, "Sant Mat: Santism as the Universal Path to Sanctity", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, pp. 32-33.

81. Though guruvāda or gurū worship has been current in India from very ancient times. The cult of the divinized Satgurū is, however, more explicitly expressed by Gorakhnāth and the Nāth-panthis. See D. Miller, "The Guru as Center of Sacredness" in Studies in Religion 6 (1976-1977), pp. 327-333.

82. See M. Juergensmeyer, "The Radhasoami Revival of the Sant Tradition", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, pp. 342-343.

83. i.e. religious song.

84. The corporate singing of devotional hymns.

85. See Vaudeville, "Sant Mat: Santism as the Universal Path to Sanctity", p. 36.

86. See Juergensmeyer, "The Radhasoami Revival of the Sant Tradition", pp. 343-344.

87. Barthwal, citing R.D. Ranade, A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy. Being A Systematic Introduction to Indian Metaphysics (Poona, 1926), traces the concept of interior religion to the Bṛihadāraṇya Upaniṣad (III 5.19 and 4.12) and the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (III 14.1 and VI 8.7). See Barthwal, The Nirguna School: An Exposition of Medieval Santa Mysticism, p. 63. See also C. Vaudeville, "Kabir and Interior Religion", in History of Religion 3 (1964), pp. 191-201. It should be stressed, however, that these findings in no way suggest that the early Sants studied the Upaniṣads. There remains however, the possibility that they may have been acquainted with it through Rāmānand.

88. Vajrayāna Tāntric Buddhists of the Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for instance, are well known for their uncompromising criticism of the samāvarṇa doctrine. Vajracūci for example, is reported to have tried to prove on the basis of evidence found in Vedic literature and the Manu-saṃhitā that the idea of caste superiority can never be determined by the accidental fact of birth. See S. Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults (Calcutta, 1969), p. 72.

89. Sardar, The Poet-Saints of Maharashtra. Their Impact on Society, p. 17, however, seems to think that it was Tukārām who campaigned vigorously for the rights of the downtrodden. He views Eknāth as being more subdued in his response to class society.

90. See Fraser and Edwards, The Life and Teaching of Tukaram, p. 166.

91. In May 1978, a conference was held at Berkeley, California to explore aspects of the Sant tradition and its related movements. Jointly sponsored by the Graduate Theological Union and then Centre for South and South East Asian Studies at Berkeley University, the conference brought together scholars currently working on the Sant movement. The papers of this conference have now been published in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India.

92. For an overview of the socio-religious environment to which the Sants were exposed and its influence on their social attitudes and spiritual practices, see Vaudeville, "Sant Mat: Santism as the Universal Path to Sanctity", pp. 21-41.

One should also refer to the earlier works of Barthwal, McLeod and Vaudeville for instructive analyses of the Sant and his devotional environment. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism. McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 151-163 and Vaudeville, Kabir Vol. I, pp. 80-119.

93. The most perceptive contribution to the study of the dynamics of clan and lineage formation among the Sants in general and the Radhasoami movement in particular is beyond doubt D.R. Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and Universals of Religious Perception (Oxford, 1987). This study of the process of religious routinization and codification in Sant clan and lineage structures is to be welcomed as a vast improvement on Möller's chronological presentation of the Sant antecedents of the Rādhāsōāmī movement developed in Der Rādhāsōāmī Satsang und die Mystik der Gottheit, (see pp. 7-74). In his latest study entitled Comprehending The Guru. Toward a Grammar of Religious Perception (Del Mar, 1988), Gold examines the perplexing problem of a cohesive Sant tradition.

94. The best known introduction to the subject is to our knowledge Schomer, "The Dohā as a Vehicle of Sant Teachings", pp. 61-91.

95. See Juergensmeyer and Barrier, Sikh Studies. Comparative Perspectives in a Changing Tradition.

96. Major contributions to Rādhāsōāmī scholarship in the West have come mainly from Mark Juergensmeyer, Daniel Gold, David C. Lane and Lawrence Babb. Juergensmeyer's main contribution is his forthcoming Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith. His other contributions will receive mention throughout this study. Daniel Gold, whose main publications were earlier cited, remains the leading scholar on Sant clan and lineage formation. David C. Lane's genealogical survey of the history of Rādhāsōāmī gurū lineages is no mean effort considering the often confusing proliferation of Sant sampradāya within the Rādhāsōāmī movement. See D.C. Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh (M.A.

thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 1981). Lawrence Babb, a specialist on matters pertaining to the teachings of the Soāmi Bāgh Satgurūs of the Rādhāsoāmi faith, has recently published Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition (New Delhi, 1987) to supplement his earlier articles, "Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism", in Journal of Anthropological Research 37 (1981), pp. 387-401. and "The Physiology of Redemption", History of Religion 22 (1983), pp. 293-312. These articles present socio-anthropological interpretations of darsan and gurū bhakti in the Soāmi Bāgh community.

97. The best known sectarian interpretations of the history of the Agra and Beas lines of Rādhāsoāmi Mat, from both the Agra and Beas perspectives, are P. Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study (New Delhi, 1974), M. Sahib, Discourses on Radhasoami Faith. (Soamibagh, 1934), L. R. Puri Radhasoami Teachings (Beas, 1965) and J. Johnson, The Path of the Masters (Beas, 1982). For a comprehensive bibliography of sectarian and non-sectarian writings on Rādhāsoāmi Mat see Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 116-132.

98. Apart from a few sectarian expositions of the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī, the only noteworthy academic treatment of the subject stems from Möller, Der Rādhāsvāmī Satsang und die Mystik der Gottestöne.

99. See notes 95 and 96 above.

100. Sawan Singh or the Great Master as he is sometimes called, has two honorific titles, Bābā and Hazūr, bestowed upon him by his followers. We shall adopt the former title when referring to the Satgurū throughout the study. The term Bābā can mean father, grandfather, and old man and is a familiar appellation given to Indian holy men.

101. Two problems present themselves when using the term "Sant revivalism": one historical and the other doctrinal. The first involves the tracing of actual historical linkages, claimed or real, in the Rādhāsoāmi movement back to the Sant tradition. The other involves the task of identifying Sant elements in Rādhāsoāmi literature.

CHAPTER I

THE RĀDHĀSOĀMĪ MOVEMENT 1878-1949

Introduction

This chapter deals primarily with the formative period in the history of the Rādhāsoāmī movement. It provides a historical backdrop without which an understanding of the general context in which the teachings of Bābā Sawan Singh operate could be considered neither possible nor meaningful. It also aims at situating Bābā Sawan Singh in the early history of the movement, accentuating his role as a principal spiritual leader of the Beas line.

It traces the growth of the Rādhāsoāmī movement in the first seventy years or so of its evolution. This period was characterized by the expansion, subdivision, institutionalization and internationalization of the movement. Also highlighted is the split which led to the development of the Agra and Beas lines. The above mentioned division within the movement, was brought about by differing views on Shiv Dayāl Singh's spiritual successorship. It will be explained how this split into two camps led to the formulation of the "Agra doctrine" and the "Beas perspective", represented by Rāi Sālig Rām and Brahm Shankar Misra on the one side and Jaimal Singh and Bābā Sawan Singh on the other. Both these schools of thought have developed their own interpretations of the teachings of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī, the canonical statement of the Rādhāsoāmī faith. We are referring here to

the incarnationist interpretation, prevalent at Agra and the opposing neo-Sant view defended by the Beas camp. Central to our discussion will be a summarized treatment of the issue pertaining to both parties' stances regarding the role and status of the Satgurū and the significance of the word Rādhāsoāmī, and why at Agra there is talk of Rādhāsoāmī Mat as opposed to Sant Mat at Beas.

While outlining the growth of institutions within the movement in the years after the death of its founder, an attempt will be made to highlight the crucial role of Rāi Sālīg Rām and Brahm Shankar Misra at Agra and Jaimal Singh and Bābā Sawan Singh at Beas.

The Beginning of the Rādhāsoāmī Movement

Any study of the early history of the Rādhāsoāmī (1) movement and its subsequent development must commence with Shiv Dayāl Singh (2) (Soāmī Jī Mahārāj), (3) regarded as the founder of Rādhāsoāmī Mat. Although the term Rādhāsoāmī Mat (Path of Rādhāsoāmī) applies to the history and teachings of those Satgurūs and their gaddīs (4) which trace their spiritual lineage to Shiv Dayāl Singh, its usage as a blanket term is problematic. It tends to camouflage the differences that exist within Rādhāsoāmī circles regarding Shiv Dayāl Singh's successor and the nature and content of his teachings. Upon Shiv Dayāl Singh's death, several disciples began to serve as Satgurūs resulting in a proliferation of congregations called Satsaṅgs. Today there exist at least twenty different Rādhāsoāmī centres directly connected to Shiv

Dayāl Singh. (5) However, while acknowledging the inadequacies involved in using such a broad classification as Rādhāsoāmī Mat to cover such a diverse number of Rādhāsoāmī branches, the following must be acknowledged. The term does perform a useful function in that it helps separate Shiv Dayāl Singh's groups from other Sant groups. (6)

Shiv Dayāl Singh is said to have been born at Pannī Galī, Agra on the 25th. August, 1818. His parents were intensively devout Sahejdari khatrī Sikhs (7) of noble descent. (8) Lālā Dilwālī Singh, Shiv Dayāl Singh's father was said to have been an ardent Nānak-pānthī who devoted much of his time to the study of Sikh sacred literature. (9) Shiv Dayāl Singh's younger brother, Rāī Brindāban Singh is also reported to have been a close disciple of one Bābā Madhodās, a mahant at Derā Ranō Palī in Ajodhia. (10) There is also the theory that Dilwālī Singh and his family, which included his mother, mother-in-law, sister, and his wife Mahāmāyā were ardent disciples of Tulsī Sāhib otherwise known as the Sage of Hathras. (11) It is recorded that they often attended Tulsī Sāhib's satsangs at Hathras. It is also reported that Tulsī Sāhib would occasionally pay visits to Shiv Dayāl Singh's family home. Tulsī Sāhib is said to have predicted the birth of Shiv Dayāl Singh. He is quoted as having said that after the child was born there need not be any more visits to Hathras "for the Lord Almighty had come in their midst". (12)

Existing biographical accounts about Shiv Dayāl Singh's early life, were often written by devotees who presented eulogies rather than historically verifiable accounts. (13) From them we learn that he

was an unusual child. It is recorded that at the early age of six began to expound on the nature of true religion. It is even said that as an adolescent, Shiv Dayāl Singh delivered discourses on topics of a metaphysical nature, (14) besides engaging in deep meditation. (15) He is also said to have possessed a linguistic bent and at a rather early age is said to have been acquainted with Persian, (16) Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic and Gurmukhī. As regards the nature of his occupation, we are told that he held a variety of positions. Amongst others he is said to have sought employment at a judicial office in Banda. He also functioned as a private tutor to the Rāja of Ballavgarh and also as a free-lance Persian language tutor. (17)

Shiv Dayāl Singh's wife Narayan Dei, (18) also called "Rādhājī" was reported to be a woman of kind disposition. (19) She married at an early age and was later initiated by her husband. She later spent a great deal of time in the services of her husband's mission. Both, during and after Shiv Dayāl Singh's lifetime Rādhājī was revered as a "Perfect Incarnation of the Highest Being". (20)

The biographies of Shiv Dayāl Singh describe many touching stories of the affectionate relationship between Tulsī Sāhib and him. However, uncertainty still persists over the question pertaining to the exact nature of this relationship. (21) This uncertainty has fired the controversy between the Agra and Beas lines as to the identity of Shiv Dayāl Singh's gurū-if any. (22) Controversy centres on the question of whether Shiv Dayāl Singh actually ever had a gurū and was actually initiated. With regards to the question about Tulsī Sāhib's gurū, or

his need for one, the arguments that are drawn are largely based on theological (and not necessarily historical) grounds. (23)

Proponents of what Lane (24) calls "the Agra doctrine" such as Rāi Sālig Rām, (25) Maheshwari (26) and Mathur (27) defend the incarnationalist view. They claim that Shiv Dayāl Singh was never initiated by any gurū, pointing out that Shiv Dayāl Singh, was none other than the incarnation of Rādhāsoāmī (the supreme Lord). As a Swateh Sant, (28) it is argued, he did not require a spiritual guide from whom to receive his spiritual heritage. (29) Opposing this view are advocates of the so-called "Beas perspective", the most vocal being Kirpal Singh who contends that the link between Tulsī Sāhib and Shiv Dayāl Singh has been "overlooked" and claims that:

the Harthas saint took a keen
and lively interest in casting
the life of Swami Ji in his
own mould (and) (sic)
initiated the young child
at a very early age. (30)

Whether or not Shiv Dayāl Singh actually had a gurū or did not have one depends, as we have stated largely on one's theological framework. Maheshwari and Mathur are followers of Rāi Sālig Rām, who preached an unqualified incarnationalism. Kirpal Singh, on the other hand was a disciple in the line of Jaimal Singh, who believed in, and vehemently defended what he saw as the indispensable need of initiation at the hands of a living gurū. These two opposing viewpoints continually surface through the history of the Rādhāsoāmī movement.

Apart from their disagreements, both the Agra and Beas groups agree that there is reason to believe that Shiv Dayāl Singh did nurture a close relationship with Tulsī Sāhib. Both groups substantiate this belief by drawing upon the account of Bābā Surain Singh in Jeevan Charitā Soāmī Jī Mahārāj. In this standard biography of Shiv Dayāl Singh by Setn Pratap Singh the following points concerning the relationship are highlighted:

- i. There is reference in the manuscript to Shiv Dayāl Singh's parents being devotees of Tulsī Sāhib.
- ii. There are statements pertaining to Tulsī Sāhib's responsibility for naming the sons of Dilwālī Singh - Shiv Dayāl Singh and Pratap Singh respectively.
- iii. The manuscript mentions Shiv Dayāl Singh as having great respect for Tulsī Sāhib, often recounting stories connected with his life and work. Also, there is mention of a close relationship between Shiv Dayāl Singh and many of Tulsī Sāhib's devotees, including Girdhari Lāl whom he supported during his later years.
- iv. It is noted that Gharib Dās, one of Tulsī Sāhib's earliest disciples makes mention of Tulsī Sāhib passing on his spiritual mantle to Shiv Dayāl Singh (then known as Munshī Jī) before his death.

v. Shiv Dayāl Singh is reported to have visited Hathras, after the passing of Tulsī Sāhib to honour the memory of his preceptor.

vi. Surain Singh notes that Shiv Dayāl Singh held the writings of Tulsī Sāhib with great veneration and referred to Tulsī Sāhib as "Sat Sāhib" (True Lord) as did Shiv Dayāl Singh's disciples. (31)

After a prolonged period of intense meditation, (by some accounts fifteen years), (32) Shiv Dayāl Singh is said to have begun giving regular discourses on Rādhāsoāmī Mat, from his home, where several seekers and sādhus were reported to have been initiated. (33) On the 15th. of February 1861 (Basant Panchmī Day) Shiv Dayāl Singh declared his ministry publicly. (34) Before his death on June 15th. 1878 Shiv Dayāl is said to have initiated about three thousand men and women. (35) He lies buried at Soāmī Bāgh, Agra. (36)

During his lifetime Shiv Dayāl Singh authored a collection of Hindi mystical hymns under the title Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Chhand Band. (37) His other contribution, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Baitik contains discourses delivered to followers up to the time of his death. (38) Both of these works, however, have been a source of debate and a volatile dispute continues in Rādhāsoāmī circles over the "true" teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh.

The Post Shiv Dayāl Singh Years

The death of Shiv Dayāl Singh marked the start of a process by which the movement that had begun to form around him began to evolve into a tradition. During this period the movement expanded, subdivided and underwent a process of institutionalization. Its ideas becoming more systematic and theologically more complex. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the insider's perception of Shiv Dayāl Singh and his teachings has changed over time. However, it can be said that by making his spiritual presence symbolic and institutional, the tradition was able to preserve some form of his presence for future generations.

However, this transition, as Juergensmeyer notes, was far from being a smooth one. From the onset several problems had to be resolved. There was the sensitive issue of agreeing upon who was to be the heir to the movement's founder. There was also an urgent need for the movement to sort out the differing interpretations of its past, and thus clearly define the boundaries of belief and membership. Each of these problem areas was worked out in historical contexts specific to it, and these in turn contributed to, and altered, the shape of the emerging tradition. The process was not always even. There were critical moments in which, it seemed, the future of the fellowship was in the balance. These were difficult times, and the community did not always survive them without paying the price. (39)

During the hundred years following Shiv Dayāl Singh's death, the movement moved through several stages. The exact dates of these stages fluctuate from branch to branch. For the purposes of this study, we will concentrate on the period from 1878-1948. The years stretching from 1878 to roughly 1911, were marked by a need to build and stabilize the movement, and establish the main lines of its continuity. The period, from 1911-1948, could be seen as a time for the institutionalization of Rādhāsoāmī communities, especially as a response to the modern interests of their educated members.

These stages describe the movement's social development. Among them the easiest to detect are those that ~~concern~~ the transmission of spiritual authority, since that has to do with visible changes in the leadership. But even there difficulties remain. No branch of the movement is willing to concede that it has altered or deviated from its founder's original teachings on these or any other matters. To an outside observer, however, it is evident that there have been variations from time to time and from branch to branch. (40) These involve not only with questions regarding the identity of the living Satgurū but also in how the core of Rādhāsoāmī teachings have been interpreted. (41) It is these variations that have precipitated conflicts within the community and crises over its identity.

The initial years immediately after Shiv Dayāl Singh's death were enveloped in an atmosphere marked by uncertainty and confusion. The Radhasoami movement with what might be called "its first crisis in self-understanding". (42) Some present day accounts of the period

tend to project a picture where the transfer of spiritual leadership from Shiv Dayāl Singh to his successor appears to have occurred in a precise and smooth manner. (43) This, however, should not distract us from the fact that some of the early documentations of the period tend to present quite a different picture altogether. (44)

At the time of Shiv Dayāl Singh's death there existed two groups who could be considered to belong to the inner circles of the movement as it existed at the time. The first of these consisted of a monastic order consisting of scores of celibate mendicant sadhus. They were encamped permanently in the fields a few miles north of Agra close to the Jumna River, at a place later called Soāmī Bāgh. The other group, somewhat larger, consisted of married and working devotees, including a large number of women who attended satsangs at Shiv Dayāl Singh's home at Pannī Galī. According to Pratap Singh, Shiv Dayāl Singh's biographer, the only other branch of the fellowship was that established in Oudh in the 1860s and led by Rai Brindaban, Shiv Dayāl Singh's younger brother. Kirpal Singh (45) notes that Rai Brindaban was a close follower of one Bābā Madhodās stationed at Mahant Dera Rano Pali in Ajodhia. He is believed to have founded the Brindabanī sect. We have no concrete evidence that definitively confirms whether Rai Brindaban worked with his brother's consent and blessings or that he had decided to undertake the task of spiritual leadership on his own accord. The fellowship at Oudh was the only independent Satsang that had ever developed apart from that of Shiv Dayāl Singh. All other activities were directly dependent on him. Juergensmeyer states that at the time of Shiv Dayāl Singh's death "his spiritual reign was so

secure and seemingly endless that he had neither a contender for leadership nor an heir apparent". (46)

All branches of the Rādhāsoāmī movement remember Shiv Dayāl Singh as having a successor but there is no consensus on the question of his identity. Historical documents on the succession question are either inaccurate, scanty, biased or inaccessible. (47) Therefore, an accurate explanation of the circumstances surrounding the succession dispute will probably remain difficult, if not impossible. A careful study of existing documents however, will reveal that Shiv Dayāl Singh died without designating any single person to replace him. (48) Juergensmeyer suggests that it is probable that Shiv Dayāl Singh did not conceive of himself as having held an office that required a successor. (49) Instead a situation existed where there appeared to be a self propelling division of authority. The property rights were handed over to Shiv Dayāl Singh's younger brother. (50) Rādhājī, the founder's wife was to be accorded reverential status on the orders of her late husband. (51) One Sanmukh Dās was entrusted with the task of catering to the needs of the sādhu community camped nearby. Rāi Sālīg Rām was entrusted with seeing to it that questions pertaining to spiritual practices were attended to. (52) Thus we see that in his final instructions Shiv Dayāl Singh did not address himself to the question of who would succeed him. After his death, we learn from Pratap Singh (53) that initiations were conducted by Sanmukh Dās. There is no indication, however, of any sort that Sanmukh Dās was to be considered Shiv Dayāl Singh's successor. The first event in the Rādhāsoāmī community after Shiv Dayāl Singh's death of which there is

historical documentation is the compilation of Shiv Dayāl Singh's utterances entitled Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. This compilation was carried out by by Pratap Singh and Rāi Sālīg Rām in 1884. Neither of these individuals is described in the frontpiece of the book as Shiv Dayāl Singh's successor. Instead there is mention of them being "brother" and "chief disciple" respectively. (54)

So, for a time, the memory of Shiv Dayāl Singh's dominating presence continued to persist. It furnished the congregation with the life force necessary for its survival. For a while this appeared to suffice. There was a conservative tendency to invest the leadership in the one who had been closest to the founder himself, namely his wife. When she died in 1894, after having outlived her husband by sixteen years, Pratap Singh continued as head of the family line, (55) though the size of his following dwindled steadily. (56) For a time the sādhus took care of themselves, but later apparently because of the lack of spiritual leadership, began to wander off to other places and other gurūs. (57) The two most obvious lines of succession - Shiv Dayāl Singh's own house and his ascetic following - were inactive at best. There were however, two potential new leaders in the wings namely Rāi Sālīg Rām and Jaimal Singh. :

The Birth of the Agra and Beas Lines

Rāi Ajudhiā Prasad (58) reports that Rāi Sālīg Rām (1828-1898), also known as Huzūr Mahārāj, was born into a well respected family at

Peepalmandi, Agra on the 14th. of March 1828 and was the son of a lawyer, Śrī Bahadur Singh. Sālig Rām was said to have been well educated and is reported to have displayed a passion for languages, (59) besides possessing a highly pronounced sense for the mystical. (60) It was while serving as a high official in the government service (61) that he is reported to have met Shiv Dayāl Singh, a meeting arranged by Shiv Dayāl Singh's younger brother, Pratap Singh. It was at this meeting in 1858 that Rāi Sālig Rām is supposed to have been initiated into the Rādhāsoāmī faith (62) and is proclaimed to have served Shiv Dayāl Singh for the next twenty years "in a manner unparalleled in the annals of bhakti". (63)

Jaimal Singh (1838-1903) affectionately called Bābā Jī by his followers was born in the village of Ghuman in the Gurdaspur District of the Pūnjab to a pious Sikh family of cultivators. From an early age it is recorded that he was an ardent seeker of truth. Kirpal Singh notes that it was only after a long search for the true gurū who could explain the mystery of pañch Nām so frequently mentioned in the Adi Granth, did Jaimal Singh meet an aged sādhu in Hardev from whom he learnt of a great sage at Agra who had mastered the secrets of Surat Śabd Yoga. (64) Soon afterwards we learn that Jaimal Singh made his way to Pannī Galī, where he is supposed to have met Shiv Dayāl Singh for the first time and is said to have been initiated by the Sage of Pannī Galī (65) before joining the 24th. Sikh Regiment in 1856. (66)

The 11th. of February, 1887 saw Rāi Sālig Rām retiring from the postal service and returning to Agra to take up an active role in the

movement. Upon the death of Shiv Dayāl Singh, Jaimal Singh returned to his unit but retired on the 15th. of August 1189, after thirty four years of active service, and shortly afterwards embarked upon a life of contemplative meditation on the banks of the River Beas. (67) Unlike Rāi Sālīg Rām however, Jaimal Singh did not remain in Agra, but decided to settle permanently in his native Puñjāb after returning from a short stay at Agra. (68) It was on the banks of the Beas River that Jaimal Singh is reported to have established the nucleus of what was later to be known as the Beas branch of the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. In fact, it is the firm belief of followers of the Beas branch that Jaimal Singh was instructed by Shiv Dayāl Singh to establish his teachings in the Puñjāb (69) and to carry out initiations. (70) The Agra branch on the other hand, proclaims that it was Rāi Sālīg Rām who brought about a revival of interest in Shiv Dayāl Singh's mission, carried out initiations (71) and held the congregation together by providing it with the dynamic leadership it was thirsting for.

Given these developments, it would have been possible as Juergensmeyer (72) suggests, to predict three possible directions in which the movement could move. There was the possibility of it undergoing a process of fragmentation leading to it being disbanded; it could confine itself to a small group of followers living off the memory of Shiv Dayāl Singh; or it had the choice of expanding its social organization and developing its conceptual apparatus to accommodate new emerging directions within the movement.

The task of consolidating and expanding the movement at Agra fell primarily on the shoulders of Rāi Sālig Rām, who was, as it happens very comfortable with organizational tasks. (73) The matter of his spiritual relationship to Shiv Dayāl Singh, however remains unresolved, even among his own followers. Was Rāi Sālig Rām truly the incarnation of Shiv Dayāl Singh as claimed by his following or simply a loyal disciple who was persevering to keep the community intact after his Satgurū's departure?

The Agra school propounds the theory that Rāi Sālig Rām represents the true spiritual successor to Shiv Dayāl Singh, commissioned by him to carry on his spiritual ministry. After Shiv Dayāl Singh's death there arose in the minds of some of Rāi Sālig Rām's disciples that Shiv Dayāl Singh had not really left the temporal plane but was still present, his powers and presence invested in another body, in this case, that of Rāi Sālig Rām. This idea was to form the basis of a theological doctrine on the incarnational nature of gurūship; the notion that although there may be many unmanifested Sants, there was only one manifested Satgurū (74) in each generation. He was seen as being incarnated in the mortal frame of the Satgurū who succeeds his predecessor at the time of his death. This notion of the Satgurū which focusses on a unique singular personality, the one Satgurū of the age also emerges in Beas, but in a somewhat different form. At Agra, the dhār (cosmic current) that first descended from the heavens with Shiv Dayāl Singh is understood to continue its manifestation on earth through a succession of spiritually prepared beings. Devotees at Beas, on the other hand, speak little of the unique current, the dhār and

sometimes mock the idea; instead they understand succession to take place between distinct perfected individuals. (75) The different understanding of the cosmic identity of the Satgurū at Agra and at Beas is reflected in two important aspects of the Rādhāsoāmī practice: contemplation of the Satgurū's form and the remembrance and repetition of the five holy Names, not usually disclosed to non-initiates.

Signs of such an incarnationist theory are evident in the Agra edition of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī where mention is made of the present Satgurū being the incarnation of the departed Satgurū (76) and there is also a criticism of those who refuse to "come under the allegiance of the succeeding Sat Guru". (77) This verse (78) has been removed from the Beas edition of the Sār Bachan, since it is considered by the Beas followers to be a rather transparent reference to Rāi Sālīg Rām whom the followers of Jaimal Singh refuse to acknowledge as Shiv Dayāl Singh's equal. The Beas view is that it would seem unlikely that Shiv Dayāl Singh would have made such a claim about himself, and the general feeling is that the verse was inserted into the Soāmī Bāgh edition of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī by none other than its editor Rāi Sālīg Rām. (79) Followers of Rāi Sālīg Rām however, accept the Soāmī Bāgh rendition of verse 250 of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī as genuine and harbour no doubts that it is a sign that Shiv Dayāl Singh is ever present in the form of the succeeding Satgurū. (80)

Apart from the controversy surrounding the incarnationist perspective of Rāi Sālīg Rām there persists another debate at the

heart of which is his use of the term Rādhāsoāmī. The word is important not only because it is used to identify a movement, but more so because it is regarded as the name of the divine creative force that sustains the universe - which is to say, the appellation of the Supreme Lord. According to Rādhāsoāmī teachings there are certain words described as dhunyatmak (81) that have the ability to function as conduits for the essence of the thing they describe. The word, or words, used for the Divine are said to have that power. (82)

The potency of divine Names make them important for Rādhāsoāmī spiritual practices. According to Rādhāsoāmī teachings, the most fundamental spiritual energy is in the form of a "soundless sound" beyond the range of ordinary hearing. But the act of repeating the divine Name (or names) enables the initiate to conjure up the presence of the Supreme Being itself, and is seen by practitioners of Surat Śabd Yoga as a very crucial stage in the initiate's spiritual evolution. Many devotees consider that name to be Rādhāsoāmī. It is therefore not surprising that we find such avid interest in Rādhāsoāmī circles in the question of the origin of the name and the manner in which it originated. Was it Shiv Dayāl Singh who first coined the name or was it Rāi Sālīg Rām ?

Rāi Sālīg Rām used the term repeatedly in his writings, (83) regarding Rādhāsoāmī as the only acceptable and charged name for the ultimate source of universal energy (84) often skinned to "primal wave" of an "endless ocean". (85) Close examination of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī will reveal a frequent usage of the term Rādhāsoāmī

by Shiv Dayāl Singh and one might be led to conclude that he used the term with similar frequency and attached to it the same importance as Rāi Sālīg Rām. Yet it is imperative that we remember that the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh were compiled and edited in 1884 by Rāi Sālīg Rām. (86) Today the centrality of the term Rādhāsoāmī and its status in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī has repeatedly been questioned in Rādhāsoāmī circles, especially by exponents of the Beas school. (87) They tend to view the frequent appearance of the term in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī as proof of the hand of Rāi Sālīg Rām at work. (88) Members of Rāi Sālīg Rām's family fervently deny this and claim that they have in their possession the original manuscripts from Shiv Dayāl Singh's pen. (89)

The often quoted, so-called "last utterances" of Shiv Dayāl Singh, which might have helped settle the matter have in fact served only to complicate matters. The statement which all Rādhāsoāmīs accept as authentic, shows us a peculiar usage of the term. It reads as follows:

My Mat (ideal or teachings) were of Sat Nām, and Rādhā Swāmī Mat has been started by Sālīg Rām. let this also go on. Satsang should continue, and satsang will flourish more than before. (90)

Rāi Sālīg Rām's supporters insist that this statement refers to the special revelation of the word Rādhāsoāmī to Rāi Sālīg Rām, who then revealed the term to the world. It is further contended that since the revelation came from Shiv Dayāl Singh himself - "it was to be regarded as a further elaboration of his revelation, not a departure from it". (91)

Maheshwari (92) has ventured even further, with what might seem to any Rāi Sālīg Rām loyalist to be the ultimate argument. He explains that Shiv Dayāl Singh had in actual fact propounded two teachings; one higher and one lower. The lower path, so it is argued, was taught by Shiv Dayāl Singh during the first part of his ministry up to the arrival of Rāi Sālīg Rām. This teaching encompassed the Sant Mat of Kabīr and Gurū Nānak and Tulsī Sāhib and was centred on the philosophy of Sat Nām (the True Name). On the arrival of Rāi Sālīg Rām, however, it is asserted that the higher path of Rādhāsoāmī could be revealed. This revelation (Rādhāsoāmī as the Supreme Lord) is hailed by the Agra fellowship as the greatest spiritual teaching ever expounded. All other so-called lower paths were therefore to be regarded as outdated and of limited validity. The Satsaṅgs which today adhere to Rādhāsoāmī as the supreme teaching of Shiv Dayāl Singh uphold two fundamental dogmatic beliefs, 1) that the name Rādhāsoāmī represents the only true vehicle of salvation; and 11) that Shiv Dayāl Singh was the first absolute embodiment of the highest Lord, Rādhāsoāmī. (93)

Members of the Puñjāb branch of the Rādhāsoāmī faith and their related Satsaṅgs tend to take the "last utterances" and statements like those of Maheshwari at their face value. They prefer to argue that the phrase "Sat Nām" is a frequent feature of the Adi Granth. They see the phrase as a natural part of the spiritual vocabulary of Shiv Dayāl Singh given his Sikh background. They also point out that in one of the few writings regarded as being authentically those of Shiv Dayāl Singh, "Sat Nām" is accorded a very high rating. (94)

The Agra fellowship does not pretend to contest the fact that Shiv Dayāl Singh did indeed mention Sat Nām instead of Rādhāsoāmī in his writings. They insist that since the latter term was the name of Shiv Dayāl Singh himself (95) it would have proven awkward for him to have cited it in his teachings. They go on to argue that it was, however, the one that he really had a preference for, and for that reason revealed it to Rāi Sālīg Rām. (96) The followers of Rāi Sālīg Rām use the name Rādhāsoāmī for initiation purposes, a practice not duplicated at Beas and its related New Delhi branches who use a sequence of five Names, (97) none of which is Rādhāsoāmī. However, at Beas the term is highly regarded and serves to date as a greeting and sort of blessing besides being used as the name of the fellowship. (98) In practice, Beas Satgurūs initiate devotees into pañch Nām, "the five Names" said to invoked in Sikh scriptures. It should again be stressed that Shiv Dayāl Singh's family were Nanāk-pānthīs, and all admit that at least at the beginning of his ministry, Shiv Dayāl Singh initiated seekers into the five names of the Lord. As for Bābā Jaimal Singh these names were enough, as they were for his successors in the predominantly Sikh Puñjab. In the Beas fellowship, the Satgurūs of Shiv Dayāl Singh's lineage appear less as unique singular personalities or as propagators of a new religion than as gurūs in an extended Sant tradition of which Gurū Nānak and the early Sikh Gurūs were a part.

It has also been suggested (99) that the leaders at Beas and Delhi may have preferred to distance themselves from the term "Rādhāsoāmī" because of its implicit reference to Kṛṣṇa (100). The phrase

Rādhāsoāmī literally refers to Kṛṣṇa as Lord (Swāmī) of his consort, Rādhā. Rāi Sālig Rām's use of the term becomes understandable in the light of the fact that his family were devotees of Kṛṣṇa. There are also documented reports that point to them being supporters of the Bihari temple at the Kṛṣṇa pilgrimage centre at Brindavan, near Agra. It was here that Kṛṣṇa is said to have sported with Rādhā and the gopis according to Hindu mythology. (101) It should, however, be pointed out at this juncture, that contrary to what has been asserted by Farquhar (102) there is no evidence whatsoever to support the claim that Rāi Sālig Rām or anyone else in the movement has used the phrase to refer to Kṛṣṇa and his consort in their human forms.

Having said this, one should not exclude another possibility. This involves linking the term Rādhāsoāmī to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is done by taking a closer look at the Vaiṣṇava concept of Rādhā as śakti or pure spiritual energy of God. Given its vitalistic connotations, "Swāmī of Rādhā" could be given the interpretation "master of the force". Rāi Sālig Rām has been known to explain that "Rādhā" denotes the cosmic energy flow to the individual, from its source, i.e. "Swāmī". There is also a school of thought that proposes the following. It is argued that the peculiar spelling of the word ("Rādhāsoāmī" instead of "Rādhā-Swāmī") is an attempt to deflect attention from the usual denotation of the words Rādhā and Swāmī, and to emphasize the distinctive sounds "rā-dhā-soā-mī," used in some Rādhāsoāmī circles as the gurmaṇtra and thought to be charged with a spiritually significant cosmic force. Even those Rādhāsoāmī communities which do not hold to this interpretation of the term agree that the word has

none of the associations that are usually attached to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Instead they affirm that it has a more ethereal and philosophic meaning.

We have no concrete historical evidence to support any claim stating that Rāi Sālig Rām was responsible for coining the term or that Shiv Dayāl Singh first employed it. What is clear however, is that Rāi Sālig Rām's use of the term provides a link between Rādhāsoāmī ideas and those of a certain strain of Hinduism - a theologically abstract Vaiṣṇavism. From the point of view of its organizational value the term also had a lot going for it. By virtue of its novelty, there is little doubt that it helped cement the ideas and community bonds of the movement, and to inject into its very fabric the sense of identity, central to its existence.

The question of whether Rāi Sālig Rām was responsible for introducing the term Rādhāsoāmī, is, as we have just stated, one that is still subject to dispute. But of one thing we are certain, that it was Rāi Sālig Rām who championed it. It was he who contributed significantly to the exposition of Shiv Dayāl Singh's ideas. He systematized the theology of the movement and made it accessible, undertook the compilation of moral codes and introduced guidelines for meditation practices besides also establishing the criteria for initiation. (103) Given all of this there seems no reason to doubt that it was the result of Rāi Sālig Rām's efforts that the Rādhāsoāmī movement began to emerge with a distinctive character of its own at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Returning now to the thorny issue of successorship, we saw that the actual succession of a Satgurū at the time of such a one's death, was never as certain as the incarnationists would have us believe. At the time of Shiv Dayāl Singh's passing, for instance, there were other contenders for the spiritual leadership of the movement besides Rāi Sālīg Rām. There was Rādhājī (104) and Pratap Singh, (105) Shiv Dayāl Singh's wife and younger brother respectively. Also there was Sanmukh Dās (106) and Jaimal Singh at Beas in the Puñjāb; and there were the disciples of Shiv Dayāl Singh in Delhi, namely Gharib Dās (107). There was also Nirmal Chandar Banerjee in Calcutta (108) and Chanda Singh in the Puñjāb (109) - all of whom were working in their Satgurūs' name as well.

The three main camps that clustered around Rāi Sālīg Rām, Shiv Dayāl Singh and Jaimal Singh appeared to form an uneasy coalition, each party suspicious of the other. The relationship between Pratap Singh and Rāi Sālīg Rām had ~~been~~ ~~severed~~. They called each other names. (110) Jaimal Singh, being isolated in the Puñjāb was able to keep away from the squabbles between the leaders of the movement at Agra. He does not seem to have been regarded by them as a serious threat to their positions. Pratap Singh maintained a correspondence with Beas. (111) Rāi Sālīg Rām appears to have ignored Jaimal Singh and his camp in the Puñjāb. (112) However, the one person who commanded and received the respect of all three of the elderly leaders was Shiv Dayāl Singh's widow, Rādhājī. She was revered by all concerned as a "Perfect Incarnation from the highest spiritual plane". (113)

Upon the death of Rāi Sālig Rām in 1898 (114) there arose an uncomfortable feeling of uncertainty in his camp. The Satgurū had not indicated with sufficient clarity to whom he would pass on his mantle of gurūship. There was Pratap Singh, Shiv Dayāl Singh's younger brother, who had begun to attract many of Rāi Sālig Rām's former followers. The Dhāra Pratap Āśram in Gwalior traces its lineage to Pratap Singh, but acknowledges that he did not establish a separate community or appoint a successor during his lifetime. He is said to have initiated a number of followers, including Sham Lāl Gupta (115) and K. S. Man Singh. (116) Pratap Singh's son, however, denies that his father ever functioned as a gurū. (117) There were branches in other areas as well, like the one in Delhi led by Gharib Dās (118) and his successor Ram Behari Dās (119). There was also the Benares Satsang led by Shiv Bart Lāl (120) besides those in Calcutta under Nirmal Chandra Banerjee and in Uttar Pradesh under Rāi Narain. There were yet others who were convinced that Ajudhiā Prasad, (121) Rāi Sālig Rām's son was the successor. Others felt that the legitimate successor to Rāi Sālig Rām was one of his chief disciples, Brahm Shankar Misra.

The Role of the Central Administrative Council

Brahm Shankar Misra was a Brahmin (122) with a strong intellectual and religious background. (123) He was initially exposed to Rādhāsoāmī Mat after reading a borrowed copy of Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose), which is said to have left an indelible mark upon him. (124)

His first meeting with Rāi Sālig Rām took place in Benares in 1885 while the latter was on an official visit in his capacity as Post Master General. At this meeting he was initiated into the Rādhāsoāmī faith. (125) After Rāi Sālig Rām's death, Brahm Shankar Misra was viewed by his supporters as having assumed the mantle of spiritual leadership. (126) He is reported to have shifted the activities of the Satsang from Agra to Allahabad. He was followed, apparently by a large gathering of supporters many of whom included initiates of Rāi Sālig Rām. (127) However, by 1902 while he was consolidating his leadership at Allahabad, it became obvious that the movement was gradually beginning to fragment. The presence of a number of competing satsang branches operating independently of one another did not speak well for unity within the movement.

In a move to consolidate his position and unite the different factions within the movement (128), and probably also because he might have felt compelled to emulate his predecessors decisiveness and sense of order (129) Brahm Shankar, "in accordance with the instructions and directions" of his Satgurū mooted the idea of a coalition of gurus and their communities, to be known as the Central Administrative Council.

Prior to its formation, a notice was circulated among the various satsang branches proposing the formation of such a council and calling for the election of office bearers. This was done in the names of Brahm Shankar Misra himself, Ajudhiā Prasad (the late Rāi Sālig Rām's son), Rāj Narain (the son-in-law of the late Rāi Sālig Rām) and Sudarshan Singh Seth (nephew of the late Shiv Dayāl Singh). (130) The

notice stated that due to the unsatisfactory state of affairs prevailing in the Satsang as a whole, it was considered necessary to form a body that would regulate the conduct of the Satsang and manage its properties. (131)

The Council provided a single administrative umbrella under which the various groups could exist simultaneously. A system of elections was instituted in which the Council was to consist of ten members elected from a list of forty three contestants. The governing board of ten were to be those regarded by the majority as being the spiritually most respected and administratively most capable. In the first and only election, Misra received the highest number of votes. Because his relationship to Shiv Dayāl Singh seemed to have placed him above factional disputes, Pratap Singh was appointed president of the board with Brahm Shankar as vice-president and Ajudhiā Prasad as secretary. (132) These three were acknowledged as having the authority to initiate new members. This privilege was later extended to include Nirmal Chandra Banerjee of Calcutta, Lālā Rāj Narain of Benares and Jaimal Singh in the Punjab. (133) However, applicants could also be initiated by persons authorized for the purpose by any of the aforesaid individuals. Though the power of the Council was seen primarily as being administrative and spiritual, these were soon extended to include the financial. (134)

Though the desire behind the elected body was for unity, the eventual result was quite the opposite. To start with the Central Administrative Council was not a representative body in the real

sense. The election system proved to be technically defective for only male voters were permitted to cast their votes, women voters being excluded from the process. Often, the much talked about majority appeared to be a discernable minority because the constitutional structure of the Council was unrepresentative.

In practice the Council tended to impose on matters thought to be the purview of the Satgurū, though in theory it claimed to recognize his supreme authority. In actual fact what was happening was that a group of influential people began to assert itself in matters pertaining to the congregation. This led to a mounting feeling of dissatisfaction among many members of the faith who were very unhappy at seeing the powers and status of the Satgurū who had been fountain-head of all authority, being slowly eroded. (135) Its establishment, was, therefore seen by many as being a bureaucratic tool in the hands of a few. This minority was seen as being solely interested in furthering their vested interests and this led to schisms among the competing parties.

From its very establishment the Council was plagued by problems which gnawed at its very foundations and hindered it from ever functioning with any degree of efficiency. Jaimal Singh for one refused to acknowledge Brahm Shanka Misra's authority to initiate. He refused to hand over his records (136) to the Council, and questioned its administrative and theological authority. (137) Like Rāi Sālīg Rām, Jaimal Singh was convinced of the legitimacy of the continuation of Shiv Dayāl Singh's legacy and his followers, like those of Rāi Sālīg

Rām, accorded great importance to the idea of a continuing gurū succession. This was an idea that certainly was not alien to the Puñjābī, given his familiarity with the historical lineage of the ten Sikh Gurūs. The difference between the followers of both Rāi Sālig Rām and Jaimal Singh lay, however, in specifying where that line of spiritual authority lay. For Jaimal Singh's supporters there was no question that Jaimal Singh was the rightful successor to Shiv Dayāl Singh. (138) Given this situation, it was understandable that they (i.e. those in Jaimal Singh's camp) were not about to relinquish any of the authority they believed was implicit in his gurūship. They were also unwilling to modify their Puñjāb oriented approach to suit the tastes of their brethen in Agra. Besides, Jaimal Singh was thought to have been specially commissioned by Shiv Dayāl Singh to establish his mission in the Puñjāb, (139) and could hardly alter his assignment at any one else's urging.

While all these developments were taking place Jaimal Singh remained at Beas. It was now some years since he went into early retirement and was preoccupied with his work of continuing the spiritual mission of Shiv Dayāl Singh, which he believed had been passed on to him. (140) After he began the task of initiating new followers in 1884, (141) and established his hermitage on the west bank of the Beas River, between Jullunder and Amritsar, Jaimal Singh's following began to grow. By the time of his disassociation from the Central Administrative Council in 1902, his colony began to display a positive potential for future growth. It was eventually to form the nucleus of

Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh, the headquarters of the Beas vicinage under his successor, Bābā Sawan Singh.

Jaimal Singh died on the 29th. of December 1903 after a period of extensive satsang work at the Beas colony where he initiated some three thousand seekers. (142) He left behind a work entitled Parmathri Patra and a collection of letters published as Spiritual Letters by the Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas. (143)

Bābā Sawan Singh and the Early Developments at Beas

Bābā Sawan Singh (144) was born into a highly respected family of Grewal Jat Sikhs in the village of Jatana, near Mehmansinghwala in Ludhiana District, on the 19/20th. of July 1858. (145) He was the only son of S. Kabal Singh, a Subedar Major in the Indian Army. This was the highest commissioned officer's rank to which an Indian could aspire in colonial India. (146) From early childhood it is reported, that he exhibited "signs of great sagacity and a devotional bent of mind", (147) and "was deeply interested in matters spiritual" and "kept up a continuous search for a genuine and perfect Master". (148) This religiosity is said to have continued into his early manhood. Bābā Sawan Singh is said to have made many a visit to holy men who he thought might be able to divulge to him the essence of Truth. (149)

He matriculated from a school in Gurjawal, and taught at the Military School at Farrukhabad. Bābā Sawan Singh then joined the Thompson College of Engineering at Roorki in 1884. On graduating from this institution, he enlisted with the Military Engineering Service at Nowshera. He then served in Nathiagali, Cherat, Abbotabad and Meerut, commissioned as a Sub-Divisional Officer. (150) While stationed at the Murree Hills in 1894, (151) he heard from a friend and spiritual teacher, Bābā Kahan Singh that Jaimal Singh had come to Murree. It seemed the opportune time for him to confront the "true Master of the highest order" that he had so desperately been seeking all this while. (152) From the time of his initiation (153) until Jaimal Singh's death in 1903, Bābā Sawan Singh made regular visits to Jaimal Singh's hermitage at Beas. These visits were occasionally reciprocated by Jaimal Singh.

Several months before Jaimal Singh died he is believed to have appointed Bābā Sawan Singh as his successor. (154) We have various accounts on record that confirm his nomination as the succeeding Satgurū. Kirpal Singh, an early initiate of Bābā Sawan Singh and considered by some to be his rightful successor, recounts one declaration made by Jaimal Singh about this:

The construction of the Satsang hall had by now been completed, and everyone pressed Baba Ji to deliver a discourse. He, however, remonstrated: "No no; the Will of God is otherwise. He who is to succeed me shall address you there. Bibi Riko was equally adamant: "We shall of course hear him when his time comes, but now while you are here, let us have the benefit of your presence." But Baba Ji insisted: "I wish Babu Ji (Sawan Singh)

to discourse to all present during my
lifetime so that there shall be no dispute
later. (155)

Though initially reluctant to accept the gurūship from Jaimal Singh (156), Bābā Sawan Singh finally took over the duties of head of the gaddī nishān at Beas whilst still serving as a military engineer. Soon, becoming bored with his service, he eventually opted for early retirement and left the service in 1911-after repeatedly soliciting and finally receiving permission from Jaimal Singh to do so. (157) He had served in the Indian Army for a total of twenty eight years. He was now to remain at Jaimal Singh's sacred centre on the west banks of the Beas River, three miles from the town's railway station.

Bābā Sawan Singh is credited with the creation of a new colony in the midst of a previously uninhabited wasteland alongside the Beas River which was originally the camp site and refuge of Jaimal Singh. By the time Bābā Sawan Singh had received the spiritual mantle from his predecessor, the site which was near Jaimal Singh's home village was no longer a solitary place: The number of Jaimal Singh's followers had grown rapidly, and many had joined him as permanent residents at his retreat. (158) Bābā Sawan Singh had no intention of leaving the place the haphazardly organized campsite he had first found. There was literally only a mud hut occupied by Jaimal Singh and a small shack with a thatched roof where Bībī Rukko prepared the meals. He commenced with the construction of a spiritual colony dedicated to the memory of his Satgurū and named it Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh (Bābā Jaimal Singh's camp), known today as Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas.

The colony's layout and the architectural design of its buildings, both of which remain today essentially as Bābā Sawan Singh envisioned them, are imposing achievements. The centrepiece of his design is the satsang ghar, the worship hall for the community. This building, with a seating capacity of ten thousand was completed in the mid-thirties under Bābā Sawan Singh's supervision. It, is a sort of brick fortress with turrets, it creates a distinct landmark on the Puñjāb plains. (159) Taking into consideration the fact that Bābā Sawan Singh initiated some one hundred and twenty five thousand devotees (160) in his lifetime, it is indeed not surprising that the Derā served not only as a residential community but also as headquarters for a constantly expanding organization. Besides this, it also had a symbolic as well as a practical effect on creating a stable, intimate spiritual community:

After seeing to the completion of building works at the Derā Bābā Sawan Singh seems to have yielded to many requests from his followers and undertook a series of lecture tours that saw him travelling through many parts of the Puñjāb and other regions of Northern and Central India, initiating as well as setting up satsang ghars. (161)

At Beas, two Americans figured prominently in developing the spiritual community that Bābā Sawan Singh had established and giving it a distinct international outlook, one was Dr. Julian Johnson and the other Dr. Randolph Stone.

Dr. Julian Johnson was a native of Kentucky and a distinguished surgeon, who was initiated by Bābā Sawan Singh in 1931. (162) He was Bābā Sawan Singh's second American representative, prior to his arrival in India in 1932. Dr. Johnson was to remain with his Satgurū at Beas for eight years. From 1933-1939, he devoted much of his time to writing books on Rādhāsoāmī philosophy and his experiences at Beas. He was responsible for persuading Sewa Singh to translate the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose) into English, later assisting Sewa Singh in this task. The first edition was published in 1931 with the approval of Bābā Sawan Singh. Johnson's first work, With a Great Master in India, was a compilation of letters he had written to fellow Americans about his first eighteen months in India. His next two books, Call of the East and The Unquenchable Flame, were semi-autobiographical accounts of himself and his future wife, Elizabeth Bruce. Yet, it was not till 1939 that his best known work, The Path of the Masters was published. The English book was the first attempt of its kind and it represented an effort at explicating the history and practice of Surat Śabd Yoga. It is considered by some to be Johnson's magnum opus, and is sometimes overrated as an encyclopedia of oriental philosophy, and a classic study of oriental mysticism. (163) Johnson himself makes no such claims. (164) It is said to have been published after Bābā Sawan Singh had some of his suggestions incorporated into the text and had subsequently approved the contents in principle. (165)

The other American to take up residence at the Dera was Dr. Randolph Stone, a Chicago osteopath who was initiated into the Rādhāsoāmī faith in 1945. It was he who developed a healing method known as polarity

therapy, based on some of the concepts of the Rādhāsoāmī metascience. A clinic for the practice of polarity therapy was established at the Beas Derā in the 1950s and it now enjoys wide usage not only within Rādhāsoāmī circles, but outside as well. His contribution to Rādhāsoāmī literature is his Mystical Bible which presents a Rādhāsoāmī interpretation of Old and New Testament verses.

It was under the dynamic spiritual leadership of Bābā Sawan Singh that the teachings of the Sants reached distant shores. At the same time that foreigners were coming to India to be initiated into the faith by the Masters at Dayāl Bāgh and Beas other foreigners were being exposed to the Rādhāsoāmī faith from afar. The first to introduce the Great Master to the Pacific North West was Kehar Singh Sasmā, a devoted devotee of Bābā Sawan Singh. He was serving as interpreter for the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company and the Canadian Pacific Steamship Lines, at the time. It was he who was authorized by Bābā Sawan Singh to initiate by proxy Dr. and Mrs. Brock, Bābā Sawan Singh's first American representatives, in 1911. (166) It was only in 1933 that the Brocks wrote to Bābā Sawan Singh requesting him to allow another initiate, Mr. Harvey Myers of Southern California, to act as American representative in place of Dr. Johnson who had left for India. In response to the Brocks' recommendation, Mr. Myer's appointment as the Master's representative "to take up the work in the south" was approved and Mr. Myer continued to serve the Great Master until the 1940s. Although the spread of Sant Mat in America had been modest during this time, the important groundwork had been laid for the establishment of the North American saṅgat. (167)

It was in September 1947 that the signs of overwork and strain began to show on Bābā Sawan Singh. After handing over the management of the Derā to a managing committee, (168) he left for Amritsar for medical treatment. Bābā Sawan Singh's health improved a little at Amritsar but deteriorated again in the following month. He died at the Derā on April 2nd, 1948 at the age of ninety. (169)

A number of works have been attributed to the Great Master. Tales of the Mystic East is a compilation of many of his discourses delivered at Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh from 1903-1948. It represents an effort to throw light on the esoteric meaning of parables, allegories and symbolism of the well-known mystics of the East. It also attempts to illustrate the finer points of spiritual discipline. (170) In 1963 a second volume of discourses appeared under the title of Discourses on Sant Mat. Under the supervision of Charan Singh, Bābā Sawan Singh's Punjābī discourses were translated into English, the actual work of translation being undertaken by a number of devotees at Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas. (171) Bābā Sawan Singh's letters have now appeared in a volume entitled Spiritual Gems. (172) As a supplement to this volume, Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas has released another compilation consisting of Bābā Sawan Singh's correspondence with American devotees, covering the years 1911-1934. (173)

The Gurmat Siddhānt (174) (literally, "demonstrated truths of the teachings of the gurus" loosely translated as the Philosophy of the Masters) first appeared in Punjābī in 1918. It was later revised and enlarged into two volumes in 1948. (175) The Hindī version appeared

in 1962, published both by Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas and the New Delhi based Rūhānī Satsaṅg. The Gurmat Siddhānt is considered by many to be Bābā Sawan Singh's major statement on Sant Mat. (176)

The English translation of the Gurmat Siddhānt appeared in five volumes (177) for the first time in 1963. It has since seen a number of editions. The translations were carried out by R. D. Ahuwalla, one time secretary of Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas and T. A. Aggrawal, chairman of the Executive Committee of Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas. It is these five volumes which we are concerned with in this study.

Summary

Our study of the period 1878-1948 in the history of the Rādhāsoāmī movement centred on observing its transformation from a movement to a tradition. This transition, as we have seen was beset with problems, characterized by controversies regarding the identity of Shiv Dayāl Singh's successor. These controversies led eventually to a split within the movement, giving rise to the incarnationalist Agra and neo-Sant Beas camps, each with differing interpretations of Rādhāsoāmī Mat. In studying the process of institutionalization of the movement, we traced the growth of the colonies at Agra and Beas and assessed the role of the principal founding figures involved in their early development. When one looks at early history of the Agra and Beas lines, one is able to observe that the movement was only able to form a coherent tradition after a period of uncertainty and confusion

following the passing of the principal Satgurū . In each case, we have seen that those who gathered around the founding figure were welded into a cohesive community by the strong hand of the Satgurū who also distilled definite doctrines out of an initial body of teachings. We also saw that ultimately the movement reached a point where it opened its doors to outsiders and provided seekers of diverse cultural backgrounds a sense of belonging. But most important of all we have been able to display the initial historical process by which the Agra and Beas branches of the Rādhāsoāmī movement built their own individual histories that furnished them with a sense of self-identity.

NOTES

1. The term "Rādhāsoāmī" is a technically incorrect romanization of the Hindī term, "Rādhāsvāmī." We have spelt the word as "Rādhāsoāmī" in deference to Soāmī Bāgh who consider it an affront not to spell the words Rādhā and Soāmī together (thereby dropping the capital in the last word). The other branches of the movement, however, spell it variously and do not seem to mind how the word is spelt. For more on this question see Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, S.D. Maheshwari, Correspondence with Certain Americans Vols. I-V (Agra, 1960-1967) and Babb, "The Physiology of Redemption", p. 293.

2. "Shiv Dayāl Singh" is the generally accepted spelling. Other Hindī accentuated versions like "Sibdayāl Singh" or "Siva Dayāl Sāheb" appear to be exceptions. See S. Basu, Some Mystics of Modern India (Varanasi, 1979), p. 214 and J.N. Farquhar, "Rādhāsoāmīs", in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. 10, (Edinburgh, 1930), p. 558.

Interesting to note also, is the fact that Farquhar's mistaken belief that Shiv Dayāl Singh's real name was Tulsī Rām. This error is repeated in all the editions of his study and remains inexplicable. See Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddī Nasheens connected with Shiv Dayāl Singh, p. 8.

3. Shiv Dayāl Singh's titles are usually given as, Śrī Shiv Dayāl Sahib, Swāmī Jī Mahārāj (Soāmījī Mahārāj) and Param Sant Huzūr Swāmī Jī Mahārāj.

4. A term often used in conjunction with gaddī nishīn (gaddī nasheen) to indicate the spiritual seat of the presiding Satgurū. For the purpose of our discussion, the term will refer to any Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg established and presided over by a Satgurū whose lineage can be traced back to either one of the focal gaddī nishīns, i.e. that of Agra or Beas, which in turn point to Shiv Dayāl Singh.

5. Although the term Rādhāsoāmī has been generally applied to those Satgurūs and gaddīs which trace their spiritual lineages back to Shiv Dayāl Singh, the proclaimed founder of the movement, there are difficulties with this usage. For example, not all Satsaṅgs adhere to similar yogic sādhanās, the same mystic philosophy or believe in the same gurū lineage.

Lane's cited M.A. thesis remains the most exhaustive academic study of the genealogical history of Rādhāsoāmī Mat. Maheshwari's Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets (Agra, 1954) and Mathur's Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, whilst fulfilling the basic requirements of a historical survey, are handicapped by a biased and partial presentation of information, coupled with what sometimes appears to be a rather lopsided interpretation of facts. This is often the result of what might be termed "gaddī myopism" - a one angled perspective of events coloured by dogmatism which, more often than

not, is an expression of the authors' loyalties to a particular Satgurū of Rādhāsāmī lineage.

In order to overcome this, it is necessary to employ a non-committal stance, which, instead of viewing successorship in terms of "true" or "false", "right" or "wrong", encompasses any gurū or gaddī linked via tradition to Shiv Dayāl Singh. This stand reflects the fact that although there exist many separate and conflicting groups within the movement, each in their own way share a common heritage.

6. See Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements. This standard work with a strong missionary bent presents a highly informative survey of a variety of Hindu sects and their leading personalities.

7. K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings. (New Delhi, 1973), p. 12.

8. Farquhar, "Rādhāsāmīs", p. 558, mentions Shiv Dayāl Singh's father, Lālā Dilwālī Singh as belonging to the Ksatriya caste.

9. See Basu, Some Mystics of Modern India. p. 214 and K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings. p. 12

10. Rāi Brindaban Singh is also said to have authored a book of hymns entitled Bihar-i-Brindaban, apart from having established the Brindabani sect at Oudh in the Punjāb in the 1860s. This group was disbanded shortly after his death. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, pp. 12-13. (a draft of chapter II of this forthcoming work has been sent to us by the author).

11. Tulsī Sāhib lived and taught in Hathras. His vital dates, place of origin and even actual name are uncertain. Most of the information we have concerning him is sketchy and scattered, and in many parts unreliable.

Indian scholars like Sen, Barthwal, Chaturvedi and Puri have based their narratives on either the biographical introduction to Tulsī Sāhib's Sabdāvalī or his Ghat Rāmāyana. The discrepancies between Tulsī Sāhib's life dates in both the Ghat Rāmāyana and Sabdāvalī, though not insignificant are not readily explained.

12. Both Agra and Beas chroniclers record this incident. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith, p. 13 and K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, pp. 5-6.

13. Biographical sources on Shiv Dayāl Singh are P. Singh, Biography of Soamī (Agra, 1978), S. D. Singh, Elucidation of Japī (Agra, 1975), S. D. Maheshwari (trns.), Holy Epistles (Agra, 1964), J. Singh, Spiritual Letters. (Beas, 1973).

14. The only Rādhāsāmī historian, who has, to our knowledge mentioned this is, Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 36.

15. Shiv Dayāl is reported to have made the following observation about himself:

You know that ever since I was only six years old, I have been devoting myself to Parmath and then alone this Abhyas (practice) has become perfect.

(P. Singh, Biography of Soamiji, p. 36).

The historical value of such a statement must, however, remain open to question.

16. References to this claim appear in Mathur, Radhasoami Faith A Historical Study. We have been unable to confirm this information with any other authority other than Maheshwari.

Perso-Arabic vocabulary forms a large part of Shiv Dayāl Singh's Hidustani, which he normally appears to have written in the Arabic based Urdu script. Subsequent Satgurūs at Agra have continued writing and speaking in a language probably better characterized as Urdu than Hindī—though their works, aimed at a Hindu audience normally appears in standard Hindī. See Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and Universals of Religious Perception, p. 112.

17. Basu, Some Mystics of Modern India, p. 214 informs us of this, without, however, quoting her sources.

18. The spelling of Shiv Dayāl Singh's wife's name has been a subject of some controversy among some Indian scholars. It has often been stressed that her name was Narayan Dei and not Naraini Devi or Narayan Deiji. Evidence seems to suggest that the former version as used by Maheshwari, is correct - as opposed to the latter versions used by Mathur and Pratap Singh respectively. For a discussion on this matter, refer to Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 24.

19. Maheshwari writes:

Radhaji Maharaj was extremely kind hearted and charitable. She had her money bag always with Her and gave away to the poor and the needy whatever they wanted of Her. For the Sewa and service of Soamiji Maharaj and for the feeding of the Sadhus, the poor and the needy and for the other benevolent acts, she sold all Her jewellery worth several thousand rupees.

20. Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 435-440.
P. Singh, Biography of Soami, p. 135

21. In some Rādhāsōmī circles the claim has been voiced that, after Tulsī Sāhib's death, some of his followers shifted to the home of Shiv Dayāl Singh. But there is no indication that Tulsī Sāhib had actually initiated Shiv Dayāl Singh. Also, present day followers of Tulsī Sāhib adamantly deny that any initiation took place, although it is generally agreed that Shiv Dayāl Singh was a disciple of Tulsī Sāhib. See Juergensmeyer, "The Radhasoami, Revival of the Sant Tradition", p. 351.

22. In his Sār Bachan Rādhāsōmī (Poetry) written in versified Hindī, with Perso-Arabic vocabulary forms, Shiv Dayāl Singh does make vague references to the importance of having a spiritual preceptor but does not enlighten us about who his own gurū was or whether indeed he ever had one, at least in the physical form. He does claim however, the whole Sant tradition as his antecedent, and at times chooses to refer to specific Sants whose teachings correspond with his own. See S.D. Maheshwari, (trns.), Sār Bachan Rādhāsōmī Parts I and II (Poetry) (Agra, 1970).

23. Kirpal Singh attempts to establish a link between Tulsī Sāhib and Gurū Gobind Singh by presenting the following argument. Gurū Gobind Singh did not die in 1699, but, contrary to popular belief, travelled to Bengal where he was succeeded by one Ratnagar Rao who later came into contact with Sham Rao Peshawar, later called Tulsī Sāhib, and initiated him. See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jainal Singh. His Life and Teachings, pp. 9-10. Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 24, rejects such a theory as being without any historical basis. In all fairness it must be said that the present state of historical research concerning Tulsī Sāhib does not warrant the formulation of such a theory as the one propounded by Kirpal Singh.

24. Lane is also responsible for coining the term "Beas perspective". See Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 22.

25. The honorific title of this founding Satgurū of the Agra line is Huzūr Mahārāj.

26. Maheshwari is undoubtedly Soamī Bāgh's most vocal spokesman who has spent a good amount of his time directing his energies against the activities of the Beas and Dayāl Bāgh centres. His outspokenness has been a source of considerable controversy in the past. See R.K. Khanna, Truth Eternal (New Delhi, 1961) for more on Maheshwari's controversial career.

27. Dr. Mathur is the great grandson of Rāi Sālig Rām and currently serves as the spiritual head of the Peepalmandi branch near Agra which traces its lineage directly to Rāi Sālig Rām.
28. In Rādhāsoāmī parlance, Swatch Sants are those Satgurūs whose spiritual evolution is viewed as being divinely preordained and as such are enlightened beings without having had to undergo initiation by a living master.
29. It would certainly be incorrect to assume that all Agra Satsangs hold this view. The designation "Agra" is used here as it applies to the Soāmī Bāgh, Peepalmandi and Dayāl Bāgh centres.
30. K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 10. Such claims remain problematic as they amount to statements of faith, whose historical verifiability is questionable.
31. P. Singh, Jeevan Charita Soamiji Maharaj (Agra, no date given), p. 109.
32. See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 11. According to some Beas publications the period was seventeen years. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xiv. This calculation (i.e. seventeen years) is based, presumably, on the death of Tulsī Sāhib (1844?) and the beginning of Shiv Dayāl Singh's public ministry (1861).
33. Amongst Shiv Dayāl Singh's earliest disciples were Rāi Sālig Rām (Hūzūr Mahārāj), Pratap Singh (Chachājī Sāhib), the former's younger brother and Jaimal Singh (Bābā Jī). See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 15.
34. "On Basant Panchmi Day in the year 1861 the flood gates of Surat Shabd Yoga were now thrown open by Swami Ji to the general public". (K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 14). Both Mathur and Maheshwari assert that this was done on the bidding of Rāi Sālig Rām. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 36 and Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 43.
35. Juergensmeyer notes that Shiv Dayāl Singh's biographer Pratap Singh places the figure as high as ten thousand i.e; one thousand celibate sādhus and seven thousand to nine thousand married devotees. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 24. Other accounts speak of only four thousand celibate sādhus and two thousand householders. See Souvenir In Commemoration of the First Centenary of the Radhasoami Satsang (1861-1961), (Agra, 1975), p. 19.
36. After Shiv Dayāl Singh's death, a simple sanādh (repository of the remains of a Satgurū's body) of white sand stone was constructed by Rāi Sālig Rām but this was later dismantled by his successor, Brahm Shankar Misra in 1904. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 100-108.

Babb's "Physiology of Redemption", pp 284 -295, is a socio-anthropological analysis of gurū worship at Soāmī Bāgh which is built on an intriguing interpretation of the symbolic significance of the samādhi at Soāmī Bāgh.

37. The original manuscripts of the work are said to be kept at Huzūrī Bhavan, Peepalmandi, Agra and are said to bear Shiv Dayāl Singh's signature. It is believed by some that Rāi Sālīg Rām edited the text and arranged the hymns into forty two chapters before having it published in 1884. See Khanna, Truth Eternal. Confirmation of this has also been received from Mr. K.S. Narang of Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas. (Letter dated 5th. September 1988). Juergensmeyer in a letter to us dated 27th. November 1988, writes that Mathur acknowledges that the Peepalmandi manuscript is not the original

38. The original manuscripts, (one in Urdu, the other in Hindī) are said also to be preserved at Peepalmandi, Agra. There are several different editions of this work and it is debatable which edition is the truly authentic reproduction of Shiv Dayāl Singh's discourses. Both the Agra edition and the Beas interpretation will be referred to in this study.

39. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 12.

40. One of the major obstacles in understanding Radhasoami gaddī nishīn lineages is the proliferation of the different sampradāya related to Shiv Dayāl Singh, most of them being small and relatively unknown. Lane's often cited genealogical history of these lineages is the most extensive of its kind in English but is far from complete and there are many lesser known groups which have yet to be examined. However, a totally exhaustive genealogy is almost an impossibility given the tremendous growth of subdivisions within the movement. For a graphic illustration of this problem, see Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheens connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, pp. 111-114.

41. We are not aware of any studied appraisal of the various interpretations of Shiv Dayāl Singh's teachings, seen from the viewpoint of the different Rādhāsoāmī factions. It is to Möller's credit to have pioneered a study of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. See Möller, Der Rādhāsvāmī Satsaṅg und die Mystik der Göttestone.

42. Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 2.

43. The often cited studies by Mathur and Maheshwari are such examples.

44. These include the biography written by Shiv Dayāl Singh's brother, the writings of Shiv Dayāl Singh's successors and letters of the early leaders. The best sources of information on the early period of the Rādhāsoāmī movement are P. Singh, Biography of Soamī.

Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Radhasoami Parts I and II (Poetry), Holy Epistles Parts I and II, and Bhaktmal of the Radhasoami Faith (Agra, 1979), J. Singh, Spiritual Letters. Non-sectarian sources include Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements and Basu, Some Mystics of Modern India.

45. See K. Singh, A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, pp. 12-13.

46. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 3.

47. In the course of our research we have encountered difficulties in obtaining permission to examine materials in the archives of one of the Radhāsōāmī Āśrams. In the case of Kirpal Āśram, spiritual seat of Darshan Singh, for example, we were informed by the secretary, Mr. J.M. Sethi that most archival materials were considered confidential. (Letter dated 18th. March 1987).

48. One such document is the so-called "last utterances", incorporated into Shiv Dayāl Singh's biography, and accepted by all Radhasoami groups as genuine. This document was published twenty four years after Shiv Dayāl Singh's death. The "last utterances" should be read with the situation of 1902 in mind. There is a possibility that Pratap Singh's memory was stimulated by the desire to appease the various contending factions within the community at the time and not to enhance his own reputation as well.

49. Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 3.

50. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xi

51. The role of Rādhājī is to be seen in the context of the Nij Ansh (literally, "emanation of the Supreme Being") doctrine that became widely circulated during the time of Brahm Shankar Misra, second Satgurū of the Agra line. After Shiv Dayāl Singh's death Rādhājī continued to be revered as a divine incarnation by most devotees, including Rāi Sālīg Rām and Jaimal Singh. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xi.

52. Kirpal Singh is quick to point out that Rāi Sālīg Rām was only entrusted with the task of "elucidating" the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh and nothing was said of the right to initiate. See K. Singh, A Great Saint, p. 111.

53. See P. Singh, Biography of Soamīī, p. 190.

54. Pratap Singh avoids mentioning any successor to Shiv Dayāl Singh, describing Rāi Sālīg Rām only as his "chief and most beloved disciple". See P. Singh, Biography of Soamīī, p. 33. Kirpal Singh speaks of Rāi Sālīg Rām as being among Shiv Dayāl Singh's "trusted and devoted disciples". See K. Singh, A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 15.

55. Pratap Singh, popularly called Chāchaji Mahārāj was one of Shiv Dayāl Singh's closest disciples and was deeply attached to his brother Satgurū. He is said to have received instructions from Shiv Dayāl Singh to conduct satsaṅgs after his death and did so accordingly till he died in 1909. His association with Rāi Sālig Rām was sometimes laboured, though he eulogized Rāi Sālig Rām as the gurmukh of Shiv Dayāl Singh, despite whatever differences arose between them from time to time. See P. Singh, Biography of Soami, pp. 65-66 and pp. 136-138. Also, Maheshwari, Holy Epistles Part II, p. 109 and Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Daval Singh, pp. 46-47

56. Rāi Sālig Rām reported that on his retirement and subsequent return to Agra in 1887, there were only forty sādhus and one hundred lay members of the fellowship - a vast reduction in numbers, that in the heyday of Shiv Dayāl Singh's ministry ran into the thousands. See Souvenir in Commemoration of the First Centenary of the Radhasoami Satsang (1861-1961), p. 191.

57. Not all left, for we learn from Pratap Singh that there were still a hundred living at Soamī Bāgh in 1902, at the time he was engaged in writing his elder brother's biography. See P. Singh, Biography of Soami, p. 190. Special rules were drafted in 1905 by the Central Administrative Council limiting their activities and curbing their freedom of movement. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 59-61.

58. The principal sources on Rai Salig Ram's life history are J.A. Prasad, Jeevan Charitra Huzur Maharaj (place and date not given) S.D. Maheshwari, Biography of Huzur Maharaj (Agra, 1971) and by the same author, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets pp. 43-67.

59. Mathur eulogizes in the typical fashion of most Radhasoami biographers:

Through out his academic carrier, Rai Saligram was a brilliant student. After completing his primary education he passed the Senior Cambridge examination in 1847 with distinction in Theology, English, Mathematics and Urdu. Subsequently he devoted himself to higher studies in Persian and Arabic. He also studied books on religion and astrology.

(Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 69).

Mathur further claims that Rāi Sālig Rām even wrote a book on Astrology which was never printed, the manuscript of which is preserved at Hūzūrī Bhavan, Peepalmandi, Agra. See Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 69.

60. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 37.
61. His forty years service in the postal service culminated in his being appointed Post Master General of the North Western Frontier Provinces in 1881, a fact enthusiastically highlighted by Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, pp. 33-36.
62. Although this meeting is confirmed both by Prasad, Jeevan Charitra Huzur Maharaj, pp. 68 and 141 and Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 38, there is nothing in their descriptions that suggests that any initiation took place. Lane, in Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 30, reminds us that Rāi Sālig Rām is reported to have emerged from his five hour meeting with Shiv Dayāl Singh, exclaiming only that he had found what he was seeking.
63. See P. Singh, Biography of Soami, pp. 62-63. Rāi Sālig Rām is said to have served his Satgurū with his body, mind, wealth and spirit. See H. M. Harper, Gurus, Swamis and Avatars (Philadelphia, 1972), p. 102.
64. Jaimal Singh's spiritual wanderings prior to meeting Shiv Dayāl Singh are described in K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, pp. 24-36 and J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, (see Introduction).
65. The dates of this meeting differ according to different authors. Kirpal Singh, representing the Beas line, places the first meeting at 1854, four years before Rāi Sālig Rām met Shiv Dayāl Singh in 1858 and seven years before Shiv Dayāl Singh made his ministry public. See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 37. The Agra account however, has it that this meeting took place sometime after Jaimal Singh was encamped with his detachment in Agra in 1856 and after he had attended Shiv Dayāl Singh's spiritual meetings which commenced only after 1861. Both Mathur, (Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 128) and Maheshwari (Holy Epistles, Part I, p. 400) put forward this view. However, Mathur's information is based on a misreading of Kirpal Singh's account which distinctly mentions 1854 and not 1856 as asserted by Mathur, who misquotes Kirpal Singh.
66. The date mentioned in the Beas edition of the abridged version of Sār Bachan Rādhāsōmī (Prose),, is 14th. July 1857. All other sources state 1856 as being the year of this meeting.
67. The scene at Beas is described by Kirpal Singh as follows:
- Shortly before Baba Jaimal Singh came to settle down on the banks of Beas Khazana Mal arrived, had the hut plastered with mud and a cave dug out. It was the year 1891 and Baba Ji gave himself with redoubled zeal to his spiritual sadhnas.

He would enter the cave and stay in it for days on end, sometimes as long as a fortnight.

(A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh, His Life and Teachings, p. 63).

68. This represents the Beas version of what transpired after the death of Shiv Dayāl Singh. The followers of Rāi Sālīg Rām, however, claim that Jaimal Singh stayed in Agra as a disciple of Rāi Sālīg Rām, and had a hut built so that he could have lived near the latter. They claim that Jaimal Singh did not go to the Puñjāb until after Rāi Sālīg Rām's death in 1898. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 28.

69. For Kirpal Singh's description of the event, see A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 50.

70. The first disciples of Jaimal Singh are said to have been Mistri Elahi Baksh and Bhāi Lenna, both boyhood friends from the town of Ghuman. See K. Singh, A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 62.

71. We have no record of when Rāi Sālīg Rām began to initiate but are told by Maheshwari, (Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 41) that Brahm Shankar Misra was one of the first individuals to have sought initiation from Rāi Sālīg Rām.

72. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 4.

73. Although there is general agreement that Rāi Sālīg Rām possessed formidable leadership qualities, there is no consensus about just how innovative his ideas were. His most ardent supporters tend to downplay his originality with the same conviction that they elevate his spiritual authority. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 42.

74. Here the term "manifested Satgurū" means a Satgurū who comes as an incarnation of Shiv Dayāl Singh, as opposed to one who comes in succession to him. The Nij Ansh doctrine of the Agra fellowship stipulates that at any one time there is only one Satgurū who conjointly with his Gurmukh Sant, is his only chosen heir. There is therefore an unbroken succession of Satgurūs each inheriting from his successor the divine spirit of Shiv Dayāl Singh. Gurmukh Sants are considered "Shakta Surats", i. e. companion spirits of the divine essence, embodied in Shiv Dayāl Singh. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 372 for an elucidation of this theory.

75. Shiv Dayāl does on various occasions speak of a succeeding Satgurū in each generation. Though this does not throw light on how the successor is determined or who he is, passages in the Sar Bachan Radhasoami (Poetry and Prose) have been repeatedly used by Rāi Sālīg

Rām's followers to bolster their claims that he has been honoured with the spiritual successorship of Shiv Dayāl Singh.

This view has always been challenged by the supporters of Jaimal Singh who refuse to regard Rāi Sālig Rām as Shiv Dayāl Singh's successor. They also reject the Agra interpretation of verse 250 of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry), the contents of which forms the core of the controversy and shall be discussed shortly.

76. Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose), p.215.

77. Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose), p.216.

78. The passage in question is verse 250 of Part II of Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose).

The Beas version reads:

If any one initiated by a perfect Sat Guru having love and faith in Him, serving Him devotedly, and before he has advanced far the guru should depart, he should continue just the same with his love and devotion and continue to contemplate His form and perform all the exercises prescribed by the guru. The same Sat Guru in the radiant form will continue to carry on the work as He had commenced it, and will carry it on to final success, the same as if He were still in the body. °

(Quoted by Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 376-377).

The Agra version reads:

If a person has met the perfect Sat Guru, performs His service, attends His satsang and has love for and faith in Him, but before he achieves his object i.e., gets any inner realization the Sat Guru departs, then he should, if he is keen to attain the goal cultivate the same love for and faith in, the succeeding Sat Guru and should perform His service, attend His satsang and consider the departed Guru to be present in Him. he should know that Shabd Forms of the Sat Guru and the Sant are, one though, outwardly in bodily forms they appear to be two.

When the Sat Guru of the time departs, He appoints some one of His successors in whom he re-incarnates and thus continues the work of regeneration of Jivas as before. When, however, such is not the Mauj, He returns to His original Abode. Therefore an earnest devotee should make no distinction between the previous Sat Guru and His successor. But those who are bigoted devotees will not come under the allegiance of the succeeding Sat Guru. For this reason their progress will stop at the stage they had reached during the time of the former Sat Guru and there will be no further progress and improvement.

(Quoted by Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 376).

79. Within Agra circles it is sometimes conceded that this verse was written by Rāi Sālig Rām and is said to have originally been penned as a letter to Sudarshan Singh, son of Pratap Singh. The Agra camp, however, is quick to explain that this was done "under the command and instruction of Soami Ji" See Maheshwari, Biography of Huzur Maharaj p. 239. For a detailed discussion of verse 250 see Maheshwari, Holy Epistles Part I, pp. 405-407, and K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 436.

80. In Rāi Sālig Rām's time both Brahm Shankar Misra and Maheshwari Devi were considered Nij Anshas or Shakti Surats of Shiv Dayal Singh.

81. See Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose), p. 128. In Maheshwari's translation the term is transliterated as dhwanyatmak. See also Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 27. The Beas transliteration of the term is dhuniatmak. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 49. William describes dhuniatmak sounds as an order of sounds "operating unseen behind sound at audible and visual levels". See C.G. William, "Sacred Sound: Unintelligibility and Meaningfulness" in The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies 6 (1983), p. 11.

82. The Radhasoami theory of divine essence will be the subject of discussion in a later chapter.

83. Rāi Sālig Rām's teachings have been compiled in a number of books which include; Radhasoami Mat Sandesa (Agra, 1960), Prem Patrā 1-IV, (Agra, 1960), Guru Updesh (Agra, 1969), Nij Updesh Rādhāsoāmī (place and date not given), Prem Bānī Rādhāsoāmī (Agra, 1970), Radhasoami Mat Prakash: Or a Brief View of Radhasoami Faith (Agra, 1959).

84. The specific term used by the Agra following is Nij Dhār, i.e., the divine current which is believed to emanate from the Supreme Lord, assuming the form of Shiv Dayal Singh. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, pp. 122-123.

85. This analogy stems from Rāi Sālig Rām who compares Rādhā to the "first wave" of the "endless ocean" (Soāmī). The two together are seen as forming the "supreme ocean of spiritual bliss", hence Rādhāsoāmī. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 27. Maheshwari is prone to speaking about the "Ādi Shabd" which is Soāmī and Rādhā, the "Ādi Surat", Shiv Dayāl Singh being the "embodiment of the Ādi Shabd". See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 23.

86. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 43.

87. Furi criticizes certain individuals for having "such strange and unreasonable views about the simple word". See Radhasoami Teachings, p. 60.

88. Kirpal Singh maintains that Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose) was not the work of Shiv Dayāl Singh himself but was based on dictated notes taken by his disciples and published several years after his death. He asserts that it was Jaimal Singh who undertook to republish the work in Hindi at Beas, "adhering strictly to the Agra text". We are however, not told how Jaimal Singh came to have access to the original handwritten manuscript of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose), alleged by some to be kept at Huzūrī Bhavan, Peepalmandi, Agra, the death site of Shiv Dayāl Singh. We have, however, been informed that the date of the publication of the Beas edition of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose) is 1902. (Letter from K. S. Narang, Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas, 5th. September, 1988).

According to an unnamed historian in one of the Punjāb branches, only fifty to sixty of the pieces in Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part. I and II (Poetry) were really composed by Soāmīji himself, the rest being devotional poems from the pen of Rāi Sālig Rām. See Khanna, Truth Eternal for a discussion of this issue.

89. To our knowledge, there is no record of any non-sectarian student of Rādhāsoāmī Mat having access to the handwritten manuscript of Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī, purportedly preserved at Huzūrī Bhavan, Peepalmandi, Agra. This is indeed unfortunate since a scholarly examination of the document would certainly help answer many unresolved questions pertaining to the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh.

90. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part I, pp. 22-23. The Soāmī Bāgh version reads:

The Faith I had expounded was that of
Sat Nām and Anāmī. Radhasoami Faith
has been introduced by Rai Salig Ram.
You should let it continue.

(Quoted by P. Singh, Biography of Soamiji,
p. 2).

91. See Juergensmayer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 2.

92. See Maheshwari, Correspondence with Certain Americans Vol I-IV.

93. See Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 27.

94. Maheshwari's contention that the followers of Jaimal Singh and the line he established, are Sat Nāmīs (believers in the True Word) represents a gross misinterpretation of the term and clouds an accurate understanding of the term.

Sat Nāmī is the term employed to denote the sect that claims an indirect spiritual descent from Rāi Dāsa. It is also the name of another group founded by Jag-jivan Dās in the middle of the 18th. century in the Barabanki District of the United Provinces. Also Sat Nāmī is the name given to a follower of a movement founded by Ghasi Rāmā between 1820- 1830 and constitutes the Chamar sect.

The term Sat Nām does not possess for the three mentioned sects, the same connotations as it does for the Beas lineage, since the theological and cosmological implications of the term are, for the latter, linked with the Rādhāsōāmī esoteric scheme of creation, which is unique to the Rādhāsōāmī mystic philosophy. For an introductory sketch of the Sat Nāmī sects, see G.A. Grierson, "Satnāmīs", in Hastings, (ed.), Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol 11 (Edinburgh, 1934), pp. 210-211.

95. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 28.

96. See Souvenir in Commemoration of the First Centenary of the Radhasoami Satsang (1861-1961), p. 15.

97. The gurbantra of the Beas Satgurūs who are linked to Jaimal Singh is a sequence of five secret holy Names.

98. There is a theory propounded at Dayāl Bāgh, that in 1932 a meeting took place between Bābā Sawan Singh and Anand Swarup at which it was agreed that the usage of the five holy names would be discontinued and replaced by Rādhāsōāmī. See Souvenir in Commemoration of the First Centenary of the Radhasoami Satsang (1861-1961), pp. 15-17. After examining the correspondence between Bābā Sawan Singh and Dayāl Bāgh we are unable to confirm or deny that any such meeting ever took place.

99. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 7.

100. See Juergensmeyer, note 99 above.

101. Pratap Singh, (Biography of Soamī, pp. 71-72) reports Rāi Sālīg Rām as having being initiated by the "Gossain of Mathura Bindraban" whilst still a boy, with the understanding that when he came of age he would be permitted to choose his own gurū. See also Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements, p. 166.

Followers of Rāi Sālig Rām like his great grandson Mathur challenge this assertion and claim that although Rāi Sālig Rām's family were devotees of Kṛṣṇa, Rāi Sālig Rām himself was never initiated. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 30.

It is interesting to note however, that Mathur presents a version that coincides with the version given above by Pratap Singh. The reason for this apparent contradiction is best known to Mathur himself. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 37.

102. We are at a loss to explain how or where Farquhar got the idea that Shiv Dayāl Singh and his wife used to dress up as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. See Farquhar, "Rādhāsoāmīs", p. 559.

103. See Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements, p. 167.

104. Our information on Rādhājī is scanty, we have relied mainly on Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 24-25.

105. A biographical sketch of Pratap Singh appears in Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayāl Singh, pp. 46-47 and Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, pp. 121-122. Drawing on known sources, they highlight his close relationship with Shiv Dayāl Singh and Rāi Sālig Rām and his role as the first president of the ill fated Central Administrative Council. He is said to have been on very cordial terms with Jaimal Singh, whom he is said to have held in very high esteem. See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 58.

106. One of the few references to Sanmukh Dās appears in the "last utterances." See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xi.

107. From the little information on Gharib Dās that we have, we are able to piece together that he was a follower of Tulsī Sāhib who moved to Pannī Galī after the death of his gurū and attended the satsangs of Shiv Dayāl Singh. He is credited with having announced Shiv Dayāl Singh as Tulsī Sāhib's successor and is reported to have established a spiritual center at Sarai Rohilla, New Delhi. He is reported to have enjoyed a good relationship with Pratap Singh and Jaimal Singh. See I. A. Ezekiel, Kabir the Great Mystic (Beas, 1966), p. 417.

108. We have not been able to locate any information about Nirmal Chandar Banerjee or his Calcutta centre.

109. Rare mention of Chanda Singh is by Kirpal Singh, (A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 63). We are unable to throw light on Juergensmeyer's (Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 9) statement that Chanda Singh led his own congregation, for Kirpal Singh, (A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 63) talks of Chanda Singh only as being one who had received instructions from Shiv Dayāl Singh. No mention is made of him being conferred the right to hold satsangs.

110. See Maheshwari, Holy Epistles, Part II, p. 209.

Despite Pratap Singh's criticism of Rāi Sālig Rām, he is known to have eulogized him as the gurūmukh of Shiv Dayāl Singh. In 1905 there is a recorded incident where Pratap Singh's son, Suchet Singh, refused to participate in a public programme because his father was to be seated on the dais next to Rāi Sālig Rām's son, a position that would seem to equate the two. See Souvenir in Commemoration of the First Centenary of the Radhasoami Satsang (1861-1961), p. 92.

111. See Maheshwari, Holy Epistles Part II, p. 213. Sudarshan Singh, Pratap Singh's son appears to have been responsible for keeping the two leaders on favourable terms. In 1933 Sudarshan Singh wrote to Bābā Sawan Singh proposing to build a house at Beas. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, pp. 138-142.

112. We have presented the popular version of the situation. However, not all reports confirm this version. Kirpal Singh, for example, maintains that Jaimal Singh was on friendly terms with Rāi Sālig Rām and recounts an occasion where Jaimal Singh visited Rāi Sālig Rām. On this occasion Rāi Sālig Rām is said to have been overjoyed and drew Jaimal Singh "towards the gaddi, on which he was sitting in order to seat him next to himself". (A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 58.)

113.

The real name of Radhaji Maharaj was Narayan Deiji. Soamiji Maharaj said in my presence that Her "Surat had come with Him from Dhur Dham and was Nij Radha Dhar so She could be called by the name of Radhaji.

(Extract from Deposition of Seth Saheb [Pratap Singh], quoted in Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 339-340).

114. Maheshwari's vivid description of Rāi Sālig Rām's last years provides interesting reading. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 45.

115. Shyam Lal, a retired headmaster was responsible for establishing the Shabd Pratap Āsram in Gwalior and is said to have substituted the name Rādhāsoamī with Dhara - Sindhu - Pratap. Some claim that after his death there was no recognized successor to continue the lineage. So in 1940 a management committee was established, under whose auspices Shyam Lal's books were published. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, pp. 129-130. Refer also to Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 47.

116. K.S. Man Singh (Malik Sahib), an initiate of Shyam Lal publicly announced his ministry in 1940. Today he initiates in both, Rādhāsoamī

Nām and the Hindu Śaktipat, having been authorized to do the latter by Yogendra Vijrani Mahārāj. See Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 48.

117. See Maheshwari, Biography of Huzur Maharaj, p. 347.

118. Refer to note 99 of this chapter.

119. See Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical Study of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 66 for brief mention of Ram Behari Dās.

120. Otherwise known as Mahārishī Data Dayāl, this initiate of Rāī Sālig Rām appears to have commenced his mission in 1904, founding the Rādhāsōāmī Dhām Āśram (literally, "the house of abode of the Supreme Lord"), in Gopiganj in 1921. He had an extensive following throughout India and is said to have been on very close terms with Bābā Sawan Singh. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 30.

121. From Mathur, we learn that Ajudhiā Prasad (Lālājī Mahārāj), 1866-1926, was initiated by Shiv Dayāl Singh at an early age and is said to have presided over satsangs at Peepalmandi after his father's (Rāī Sālig Rām's) death in 1898. He was closely associated with Brahm Shankar and obtained his initiation rights in 1902 from the Central Administrative Council (of which he became president in 1909). He lies buried at Sōāmī Bāgh, in front of his father's samadh. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 123 and Lane, Radhasoami Mat. Parampara in Definition and Classification. A Genealogical History of the Gaddi Nasheen Lineages connected with Shiv Dayal Singh, p. 42.

122. Brahm Shankar Misra was born on the 28th. of January 1861 and died on the 12th. of October 1907. His parents were Brahmins. Juergensmeyer seems to think that his Brahmin heritage in itself posed a problem. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 10. However, Mathur does indicate that his relationship to Rāī Sālig Rām displeased some Brahmin pandits who did not like the idea of a Brahmin associating with a gurū of the another class. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 103.

123. He is believed to have inherited a broad religious outlook from his father, Pandit, Ram Yashan Misra, Professor of Sanskrit at Queens College, Varanasi. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 49.

124. In a letter to friend, Misra wrote the following, expressing his desire to become Rāī Sālig Rām's initiate:

But I tell you, dear friend how immeasurably
superior I find your Dharam Pustak. O how I
yearn to mingle myself in the dust before
Huzur Ram Sahib and follow Him through

life and death, one day to be deemed fit
to be called His true servant.

(Quoted by Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 49-50).

125. For details of this meeting, see Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 101 and Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 51.

126. Maheshwari sees Misra as "the accredited successor of Huzur Maharaj (Rai Salig Ram) who had already been holding satsang and rendering help to fellow Satsangis under the orders of Huzur Maharaj". (Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 56).

127. Originally Brahm Shankar Misra stayed at Agra, but after obtaining employment in the Accountant General's office in Allahabad. He saw it fit to develop the Satsang there, which had been established by Rai Salig Ram on one of his visits. Juergensmeyer suggests that this move added to the fragmentation of the movement" since the spiritual centre remained in Agra and looked as if the leadership was in exile". (Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 10).

128. In a correspondence with Jaimal Singh, dated 4/8/1902, informing him of his nomination to the Central Administrative Council, Pratap Singh notes that by constituting the Council "different groups and cliques will disappear and satsangis will love each other as before". (K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 61).

129. See Juergensmeyer, Radhasoami Reality. The Logic of a Modern Faith, p. 10.

130. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, p. 97.

131. The constitutional powers of the Council consisted of the following:

1. "To regulate the conduct of business pertaining to the Radhasoami Satsang and its branches and of the followers."
2. "To collect, preserve and administer the properties, moveable and immoveable, that have been, or may hereafter be, dedicated to Radhasoami Dayal or that may be acquired for or presented to Radhasoami Dayal or that may be acquired for or presented to the Radhasoami Satsang, for the furtherance of the objects of the Sat-sang."
3. "To do the above and other things which are incidental thereto in accordance with the directions and mandates of the Sant Sat Guru."

(Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 97-98).

132. The others were Rāj Narain, Baleshwari Prasad, Rāja Ishwari Prasad, Sudarshan Singh, Madho Prasad Sinha, Suchet Singh, Har Govind and Chand Kodumal.

133. The extension of the power of initiation to these three was made at the first meeting of the Central Administrative Council, on December, 25th. 1902. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 12.

134. See Maheshwari, Radhasoami Faith. History and Tenets, pp. 98-99.

135. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 111.

136. Mathur records that at the second meeting of the Central Administrative Council held on the 12th. of June 1903, the secretary Baleshwari Prasad read out two letters from Bibi Pragdesi of Amritsar and Lal Chand of Sukkur, complaining of Jaimal Singh's refusal to register his Satsang with the Council. See Mathur, Radhasoami Faith. A Historical Study, p. 112.

137. Jaimal Singh placed three conditions that he wanted fulfilled before he conceded to acknowledge the authority of the Council. These were; i) that Brahm Shankar Misra's method of initiation should be rejected and the five holy Names (pañch Nām) replace the word Radhasoami as the gurmanttra; ii) that he, (Jaimal Singh) be allowed to choose three representatives (excluding himself) from Beas to sit on the Council and iii) that Beas would not support the Council financially, at least that funds should not be solicited from the members.

Kirpal Singh explains what transpired from the Beas perspective:

Baba Ji however, was reluctant to join the Council as he felt that the changes that were taking place among the Agra satsangis were not in consonance with Swami Ji's teachings. He also objected to and opposed Maharaj Sahab's plan for building a magnificent samadh in memory of Swami Ji because he felt so humble a spirit as his Master would never have countenanced such a project.

(A Great Saint, Baba Jaimal Singh His Life and Teachings, p. 61).

It is further recorded that Jaimal Singh went to Agra, tried to explain his viewpoint to Rāj Sālig Rām but failed. He then returned to

Beas deciding to remain aloof from the activities of the Council at Soāmī Bāgh, See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 61.

138. Kirpal Singh recounts how Shiv Dayāl Singh is said to have passed on the mantle of gurūship to Jaimal Singh at their last meeting:

This is going to be our last meeting", observed the Master. "My mission on earth is almost over. I need hardly repeat that I have cast you in my mould and you are my very essence". He then turned to Radha Ji and placing his hand on Jaimal's back declared, "He is indeed our gurmukh son", and taking a saropa or headdress, he lovingly bestowed it as a parting gift to his apt and faithful disciple.

(A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His life and Teachings, pp. 50-51).

139.

In October 1877 when Baba Ji came on leave, Swami Ji Maharaj said to Him: "This is our last meeting. Now I shall go away to Param Dham (the Eternal Home), after completing my life's pilgrimage. I have made you my beloved and my own rup (self or form)". Baba Chand Singh then requested that Satsang be started in the Punjab. Swami Ji Maharaj replied: "This request has been accepted by Akal Purush, and the task has been allotted to Baba Jaimal Singh".

(J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xiii).

140. See note 139 above. It is interesting that all parties agree that Shiv Dayāl Singh commissioned Jaimal Singh to work in the Punjāb, but the Beas following interprets this commission as proof that Jaimal Singh was selected as Shiv Dayāl Singh's rightful spiritual heir.

141. In the Beas memory, Jaimal Singh did not begin initiating until after Rādhājī, Shiv Dayāl Singh's wife had reminded him that he was under her husband's instructions to do so. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xiv

142. K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 84. The main biographical sources on Jaimal Singh are K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings and J. Singh, Spiritual Letters.

J.S.

143. See R.D. Ahluwalia's preface to Spiritual Letters for editorial information on the book.

144. Popularly known as then Great Master, Bābā Sawan Singh's other honorific titles include Mahārāj Jī and Hūzūr Mahārāj Sāhib.

145. Kirpal Singh dates Bābā Sawan Singh's birth as 27th. July 1858. Most other biographers, however, point out that this date represents his official birth date as celebrated at the Derā. The actual date is given as 5th, Sawan Bikramī according to the Indian calendar which corresponds to the 19th./20th. July 1858.

Biographical information on Bābā Sawan Singh appears in D.L. Kapur, Call of the Great Master (Beas, 1964), J. Leeming's Introduction to S. Singh, Discourses on Sant Mat (Beas, 1970), K. Singh, A brief life sketch of Baba Sawan Singh (New Delhi, 1960), R. S. M. Ram, With the Three Masters Vol I-III (Beas, 1967), C. Singh, Spiritual Heritage (Beas, 1985), see pp. 30-71 and D.L. Kapur, Heaven on Earth (Beas, 1986), see pp. 67-223. The Rādhāsoāmī Satsaṅg Beas publication office has recently issued an impressive volume of pictures and first reminiscences of Bābā Sawan Singh under the title, Glimpses of the Great Master (Beas, 1986).

146. We are told that his father "loved the society of godly people" and freely mixed with them, whilst his mother Shrimati Jiwanī "was a living specimen of ancient simplicity, goodwill and contentment". (K. Singh, A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh, p. 2).

147. Kapur, Call of the Great Master, p. xxx. He is said to have completed the reading of the Adi Granth at the age of ten and could also recite the Japji and verses of Gurū Gobind Singh. It is to be noted here that biographical accounts of this sort are to be approached with caution as they tend to inflate the facts.

148. Leeming's introduction in, S. Singh, Discourses on Sant Mat p. xvi.

149. Kapur, Call of The Great Master, p. xvi.

150. K. Singh, A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh p. 3.

151. Kapur, Call of the Great Master, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

152. Kapur, Call of the Great Master, p. xxxii.

153. Accounts of Bābā Sawan Singh's initiation are documented in K. Singh, A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh, p. 6 and S. Singh, Spiritual Gems.

(Beas, 1958), p. 9. According to one account, on initiating Bābā Sawan Singh, Jaimal Singh had told him that he had come specially to the Murree hills for the purpose. See Kapur, Call of the Great Master, p. xxxii. No other biographer mentions this.

It is interesting to note that writers from Beas, like Kapur speak of Bābā Sawan Singh being initiated into Surat Sabd Yoga, which he relates to Sant Mat, (the teachings of the Saints). No mention is made of Rādhāsoāmī Mat. This could be interpreted as being indicative of the fact that at Beas, the term Rādhāsoāmī Mat does not bear any unique connotations (as it does at Agra), and is seen as being synonymous with Sant Mat. See Kapur, Call of the Great Master, p. xxxii.

154. Bagga Singh, one of Jaimal Singh's early initiates founded his own Satsang upon the death of his Master. This was done, according to one source, without authorization. Despite this, Bābā Sawan Singh and Bagga Singh remained close associates, often holding satsangs together. After Bagga Singh died in 1944, Bābā Sawan Singh is said to have installed Deva Singh as the new spiritual head at the Taran Taran centre. See D. C. Lane, The Death of Kirpal Singh. The Politics of Guru Successorship (Del Mare, date not given), p. 21 for information on the Taran Taran centre. See also A. Stephens and R. Handel, Two Fools Meet a Gurbhai (place and date not given).

155. K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, pp. 82-83. The author also mentions another occasion where Jaimal Singh is reported to have referred to Bābā Sawan Singh as his successor. See K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 81.

156. Munshi Ram, secretary of the Beas Satsang during the forties and fifties, records Bābā Sawan Singh's own testimony on this issue:

When I appeared before Chacha Ji Maharaj, he enquired, who was working at Beas in place of Bahi Sahib and who had been instructed to initiate after Him. My companions replied, "Baba Ji Maharaj has appointed Him, but He does not give initiation". "Why?" Chacha Ji Maharaj enquired. At this I submitted that I did not possess sufficient power, and said to Chacha Ji Maharaj, "You better send some Sadhu from here who would initiate people". Chacha Ji replied, "You will have to give Nam, I hold myself responsible".

(Ram, With Three Great Masters Vol II p. 225).

157. See Kapur, Call of the Great Master, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

158. The final count of those initiated by Jaimal Singh stands at two thousand four hundred and thirty-four, the first to be initiated being Amar Singh of Jhelum, (in July 1884) and the last was L. Mangat Rai (on the 26th. of December, 1903), who was the first person to serve

as Jaimal Singh's secretary. See J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, pp. xix-xxi.

159. An impressive pictorial essay of Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh is Glimpses of the Great Master. An itemized description of the types of buildings found at Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh and their respective dates of completion is found in J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xxi.

Kirpal Singh talks of a hall "in the form of the letter 'T' with dimensions 40' x 120', the like of which can hardly be seen in the whole of Northern India". (A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh, p. 7).

160. The numbers vary according to the source of information. The exact figure of one hundred and twenty five thousand three hundred and seventy five is given in J. Singh, Spiritual Letters, p. xx.

161. Satsang ghars were established in most towns in the Punjab, including Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore and Montgomery (now all in Pakistan), Amritsar and Jullunder. Bābā Sawan Singh is also said to have visited Karachi, and Sukhdur, the last being at the request of Dewa Teja Mal Bhavnani. At the request of the Rājā of Sangli, he paid Sangli a visit, stopping en route in Poona and Bombay. Satsangs were also held at Gujranwala, Simla, Ferozepore and Taran. Taran. For details of Bābā Sawan Singh's extensive travel itinerary, see Kapur, Call of the Great Master, pp. xxxvi-xxxviii.

162. The exact date of Dr. Johnson's initiation is given as 21st. March 1931. See S. Singh, The Dawn of Light, (Beas, 1985), p. 12.

The date given by Lane is 1st. March 1931, based on information provided by Julian Johnson himself who writes that he sailed to India on the 24th. of March 1932, a little more than a year after his initiation by the Great Master. Lane however, does not explain how he arrives at the stated date. See J. Johnson, With a Great Master in India (Beas, 1982), p. 13. Also refer to D. C. Lane, The Making of a Spiritual Movement. The Untold Story of Paul Twitchell and Eckankar, (Del Mar, 1983), p. 68.

163. Lane exaggerates when he talks of The Path of the Masters as if it were a scholarly study. It would be more appropriate in this case to talk of a popular interpretation. Only two chapters of the work are dedicated to Surat Sabd Yoga, the other ten deal with theological questions from the perspective of comparative religion. See Lane, The Making of a Spiritual Movement. The Untold Story of Paul Twitchell and Eckankar, p. 68.

164. See J. Johnson, The Path of the Masters (Beas, 1982), author's foreward, p. xxvii.

165. See S. Singh, The Dawn of Light, p. 14. T.S. Khanna, general representative of Sawan Kirpal Rūhānī Satsang, in his pamphlet, Dawn

of Ruhani Satsang, p. 1 casts some doubt on this ever having happened. He argues, by implication that Bābā Sawan Singh would not have approved of the manuscript without first showing it to Kirpal Singh, something he claims. Bābā Sawan Singh in all probability did not do.

166. Information concerning the Brocks' first meeting with Kehar Singh, and their initiation and their role as the Great Master's North American representatives appears in S. Singh, The Dawn of Light, pp. 5-12. Bābā Sawan Singh's correspondence with the Brocks is also included in this book.

167. See S. Singh, The Dawn of Light, p. 18.

168. In actual fact Bābā Sawan Singh established three committees, one to administer Dera Bābā Jaimal Singh, of which he was the chairman and Jagat Singh the vice-chairman. The second committee was entrusted with looking after the cultivation of agricultural land attached to the Dera, while the third, entrusted with missionary work was led by Kirpal Singh, assisted by Gulab Singh, See B. Singh, G.M. Ahuja and A.S. Oberoi, Truth Triumphant (New Delhi, 1967), p. 10.

169. Kirpal Singh's adulatory tribute to his Satgurū, Bābā Sawan Singh reads as follows:

Thus in His 90th. year on the morning of 2nd. April at 8.30 this brilliant Sun of Spirituality, after diffusing His light in the hearts of millions of masses, disappeared to rest below the horizon at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh.

(A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh, p. 35).

170. The book was published in 1961, the result of the efforts of Joseph Leeming and K.L. Khanna of Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas. Both writers had access to the Dera Archives and Sawan Library whilst working on the book.

171. They were Joseph Leeming from Washington, A.P. Kapur of Arya College, Ludhiana, K.L. Khanna of Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas, Prof. G.D. Kapur of Samatan Dharma College and Prof. J.R. Puri of Government College at Patiala.

172. First published in 1958 by Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas, these letters originally formed part of a larger work but appear today under the title Spiritual Letters.

173. Published in 1985 these letters, a large number of which were addressed to the Brocks, Bābā Sawan Singh's North American representatives. The book is the product of research by J. Lytel, V.K. Sethi and Prof. K.N. Upadhyaya.

174. The term Siddhānt (Siddhānta) is here not an accurate description of the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh presents his teachings. It would not be correct to state that the work contains "demonstrated truths" in the traditional Hindu sense of the term. Strictly speaking siddhānta is the traditional Hindu way of presenting one's case through a process of argument and counter-argument, objection and answer, culminating in the formulation of what one regards as the right conclusion.

The Gurmat Siddhānt, sometimes described as "a storehouse of systematized Spiritual Truths", must in reality be looked upon as a loose presentation of philosophical axioms and spiritual beliefs. It is in actual fact an exposition of the teachings of the Saints, in this case, mainly that of the Sikh Gurūs.

175. The question of the authorship of the Gurmat Siddhānt is a controversial one. Followers of Kirpal Singh claim that he undertook the writing of the original Gurmukhī version, Gurmat Siddhānta under the supervision of Bābā Sawan Singh. It is claimed that Bābā Sawan Singh consented to have the two volumes appear in his name on the insistence of one of his chief disciples Kirpal Singh. See K. Singh, A brief life-sketch of Baba Sawan Singh, p. 5 and T. S. Khanna, Dawn of Ruhani Satsang (pamphlet, New Delhi, 1969).

The Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas, on the other hand attributes the Gurmat Siddhānt to Bābā Sawan Singh himself. In a letter dated 15th. April 1988 from N. S. Narang of Rādhāsoāmī Satsang Beas we were assured that:

the first edition of Gurmat Siddhant
with 84 sub-heads was published in 1920,
when S Kirpal Singh was not even initiated
by Maharaj Sawan Singhji.

See also Kapur, Call of the Great Master, p. xxxix. Whatever the truth of the matter may be, for the purpose of this study we shall refer to the Gurmat Siddhānt with Bābā Sawan Singh in mind since the work is published in his name.

176. R. H. Ahuwalla refers repeatedly to "a complete encyclopdia of basic information of Sant Mat". See the preface of Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V (Beas, 1979), p ix.

177. Volume I to Volume III of the English translation represent Part II of the Punjābī edition, whilst Volumes IV and V are translations of Part I of the Punjābī version. In this study the following editions of the English translations of the Gurmat Siddhānt will be used, Volume I (Beas, 1977), Volume II (Beas, 1979), Volume III (Beas, 1977), Volume IV (Beas, 1977) and Volume V (Beas, 1977). All volumes are third editions with the exception of the second volume which is a fourth edition.

In the course of our research we have had occasion to cross-check the English translation of the Gurmat Siddhānt with that of the Punjābī original. We have been able to establish that the English translations are accurate and correct in content. Although the English version will

be our primary source of reference, the Punjābī edition will be consulted when and where considered necessary.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

This chapter studies the nature and quality of Bābā Sawan Singh's principal theological propositions. A close examination of the Gurmat Siddhānt will reveal that the epithet "theology" would be too ambitious a term for describing the contents of the work. In reality, what we are dealing with here is a loose configuration of theological tenets constructed on the strength of casual, if not superficial, interpretation of the theology of Sant Mat. (1) Bābā Sawan Singh's conception of God (2) is firmly embedded in the teachings of his Sant predecessors. The works of Kabīr, Kabīr-panthīs, the Sikh Gurūs and Shiv Dayāl Singh are the principal channels along which Sant influences pass on into his thought. The terminology he employs are their terminology, the categories he uses are their categories and the doctrines he reaffirms are their doctrines. In commenting on the possible lines of congruence between Bābā Sawan Singh's theological thinking and that of his Sant predecessors we will locate and identify the main lines of influence, outlining its complexion, main contours and most distinguishing features.

We shall ascertain what is proposed by the term the "mystery of God" and define the implications such a statement may possess for the "unknowability of God" thesis. We propose to examine the view that God

is the undefinable, unknowable "wholly other". We then study the proposal that man requires a special mode of apprehension to enable him to comprehend the unique qualities of God.

In introducing Bābā Sawan Singh's conception of God as the supreme creator, we enquire as to how he goes about postulating the existence of a transcendent reality, and the philosophical ramifications thereof. An integral part of this inquiry is an analysis of his "unity of God" thesis. We shall determine the manner in which he presents the idea of the oneness of God as an expression of His uniqueness.

The view that divine transcendence and immanence are not mutually exclusive but mutually determinative, colours considerably Bābā Sawan Singh's perception of the God-universe and God-soul relationships. The universe is seen in the Gurmat Siddhānt as being inseparable from God. In examining the view, we attempt to explain the idea that God is the material and efficient cause of the universe. Bābā Sawan Singh's discussion of the God-soul relationship rests on the belief that the soul is a mirror of God in the cosmic whole. We will highlight the way in which justification for this belief is sought in the context of his reading of the relationship of the soul to God.

We then discuss his idea of the divine perfection of God. We are interested to learn how Bābā Sawan Singh presents the belief that God is the repository of unsurpassable divine attributes.

The doctrine of divine self-expression in the Gurmat Siddhānt is best understood in terms of Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of the terms Śabd and Nām . Both these terms are used as synonyms and are seen as being the qualitative expression of God's divine personality.

Bābā Sawan Singh's contention that the divine will is the all embracing principle that is eternally and essentially inherent in the nature of God is the final subject of our discussion. We explain how the concepts of Bhānā and Hukām are presented as divinely instituted and maintained principles governing the existence and movement of the universe.

The Concept of the Mystery of God

What does Bābā Sawan Singh mean by the "mystery of God" ? His view of the unfathomability of God is intimately linked to the belief that God's inaccessibility is a function of His transcendence. (3) Much in the same vein as Kabīr, (4) Gurū Nānak (5) and some the earlier Sants, (6) Bābā Sawan Singh supports the position that philosophy and intellectual discourse are but futile efforts at "knowing God". He proposes that God is only knowable when reason is abandoned. (7)

Like the Sikh Gurūs Bābā Sawan Singh sees God as ineffable. For him, man's proper response to any authentic glimpse of God must be that of awe, fear and wonder. Though Bābā Sawan Singh does affirm their conviction that God in his fullness supersedes the bounds of human

understanding, he stops short of using the compendium of attributes developed by them to describe God's ineffability. (8)

For Bābā Sawan Singh the concept of divine transcendence is inherent in the idea of the otherness of God. This idea implies a kind of separation that cannot be intellectually fathomed or verbally defined. We are dealing here with a concept of God that treats Him as a mystery on account of His cognitively indefinable otherness which completely eludes any form of conceptualization. In order to illustrate this, he refers to the often cited "na-iti na-iti" (not this, not this) quotation from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. (9)

Bābā Sawan Singh's reference to this Upaniṣadic saying serves to illustrate his belief that no directly positive statement can be made about God's transcendence. Only figurative expressions of His sheer otherness are possible. However, even when he uses negative phrases to indicate God's unknowability by virtue of His otherness, they are always related to an entity that can be known and capable of being experienced as the cause of the universe. It becomes apparent that Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of sheer otherness is not necessarily a "that-ness" which is beyond all human categories. It is a "more-than-ness", a supreme dimension of being that cannot be identified with any empirical categories, but which goes far beyond them.

God is perceived as being incomprehensible in the sense that verbal description of Him are deemed to be incomplete, if not incoherent or

misleading. God's mysteriousness, we are told, defies philosophical speculation. In the Gurmat Siddhānt it is stated that:

Even those who do not admit the reality of religion and say that man cannot know God's nature and form, do not deny the existence of this Supreme Power. The well-known philosopher, Herbert Spenser, came to the conclusion that Reality is neither known nor can it be known by anyone. He wanted to discover the Reality through intellect and reasoning. But Reality is beyond the reach of the mind and senses. His conclusion, therefore, that the Reality is not conceivable by the mind and senses, was inevitable. (10)

God is beyond human apprehension, we are also told, because our mundane knowledge has certain irremovable limits. (11) In God we are confronted with something "wholly other" whose character is incommensurable with our own. The conclusion that Bābā Sawan Singh appears to be arriving at here is that an adequate description of God's nature and activity cannot be framed in ordinary language. God is not understood here as being beyond all knowledge but rather beyond man's limited knowledge i.e., knowledge used in accordance with distinctions dictated by the world we live in. What is implied here also is that in order to comprehend God we cannot rely on confused conceptualizations and inadequate experience but must turn to a new experience and a fuller awareness.

At this point it seems appropriate to ponder the implications of such a stance. We are confronted with two alternatives. We can ourselves refrain or discourage others from trying to conceptualize God's

nature or activity since these attempts are bound to end in failure.

In the following passage Bābā Sawan Singh states this clearly:

Do not delve into the secret of the universe, for no one up till now has solved this riddle, nor will anyone ever do so by means of intellect and reasoning alone. (12)

We may, on the other hand, try to develop some extraordinary language in which descriptions of God can be framed, i.e., by stretching language into an extraordinary use without making it unintelligible. Then there is further the alternative of refraining from attempting a philosophical reconstruction of God and instead trying to enlarge our experience thus guaranteeing a fuller awareness of the reality of God.

In proposing a proper mode of knowing God Bābā Sawan Singh opts for the last mentioned alternative. (13) He emphatically exhorts us to seek God within:

Ignorant persons think that God lives beyond the skies or beneath the depth of the oceans. Great souls realize Him in their hearts, and perfect Saints see Him everywhere, both within and without. Saints and holy men say that He pervades the entire universe and that the universe is in Him. (14)

The message conveyed here is that reason functions best in "the service of the heart". His idea of the mystical apprehension of God is that of a non-discursive, non-intellectual quest, interior and introvertive in nature. It is a quest which culminates in a mystical

experience of God that cannot be described in terms of mental images or sense experience. (15)

The main contours of the "unknowability of God" thesis in the Gurmat Siddhānt have now been outlined and we also have an idea of what is thought to be the appropriate response to that unknowability. We see that Bābā Sawan Singh is convinced that given the fact that God exists unto Himself, it should be clear that His divine nature is known to Him alone. (16)

Having said that let us now ponder the general sentiment which might be said to underlie Bābā Sawan Singh's plea to know God inwardly. He seems to suggest that man's innermost consciousness is inspired by an inherent urge to seek the absolute truth. Man is seen as refusing to remain content with the knowledge of the finite, transitory, selective truth of the world of mundane human experience. Bābā Sawan Singh appeals to that deep yearning within man for the discovery of the infinite eternal absolute reality. Knowledge in his eyes means devotion to the quest for the ultimate meaning of all existence, the ultimate cause and ground of the world order, the ultimate solution of all the problems of human knowledge and experience. This knowledge is defined as a spiritual awakening to the existence of God in the inner self. In the Gurmat Siddhānt this definition takes the form of an appeal for the transcendence of the limitations under which ordinary human consciousness operates.

The Concept of the Oneness of God

"All this creation has come out of Ekankar (One). He who understands the secret of 'I' thereby becomes the Creator and the Lord". (17) With this statement, Bābā Sawan Singh introduces his "unity of God" thesis. He sees it as being central to an understanding of the true nature of God. It also distinctly reiterates a similar conviction voiced in the Ādi Granth. (18)

One is reminded here of the opening lines of the Mūlmantar, the basic theological statement with which the Ādi Granth commences. At the very beginning stands the figure of the unity of God. The passage in question reads:

There is one Supreme Being; the
Eternal Reality. He is the Creator,
without fear and devoid of enmity.
He is immortal, never incarnated,
self-existent, known by grace
through the Guru. The Eternal One,
from the beginning through all
time, present now, the Everlasting
Reality. (19)

Here also is mentioned the figure "1" (Ek). Bābā Sawan Singh follows the same practice as Gurū Nānak in not adopting the alphabetical spelling of the word "Ek" in "Ek Ōṅkār" but by expressing it through the figure "1". Gramatically the word "ek" written in letters is an adjective qualifying the noun "Ōṅkār". But as a figure it possesses an independent position which suggests that there is only one reality in the world and that is God. (20) The Sikh tradition is unanimous in

accepting this as a declaration of the unity of God. This emphasis on One recurs throughout the Adi Granth.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt God is seen as being the one God, without a second, completely supreme, unrivalled and unopposed. He is the One who is omnipotent and whose authority and supremacy remains forever unquestioned. God is the One who is ever the same, and who is unconditioned. In short God is absolute in all respects. The idea of the unity of God that Bābā Sawan Singh wishes to express is one modelled on the Sikh scriptures. It is expressive of the oneness, uniqueness, individuality, particularity, singularity, indivisibility, continuing power, strength and authority of God. It is aimed at expressing the unity of God who is infinite. It stands for a oneness of spirit, of reality, of consciousness, of bliss. (22)

This is, of course not to overlook the fact that, like Gurū Nānak, he uses a wide variety of names when referring to God. (23) His intention, however, clearly is not to endorse any form of polytheism, for God in his experience is the supreme Reality beyond the multiplicity of appearances. But this affirmation of unity immediately raises an obvious question. Is this the "one God" of monotheism or is it the "one God" of monism? If we are compelled to choose between these two conceptions, our choice must inevitably fall on the former, for Bābā Sawan Singh's thought, cannot, in this case be made to conform to the categories of Advaita Vedānta.

The Concept of the Creator

Bābā Sawan Singh's theory of causation relies on the assumption that creation is inseparable from the existence of an ultimate, supreme transcendent creator. (24) In the Gurmat Siddhānt he employs the names Sat Purus, (25) Nirāñjan, (26) Nirāñkar, (27) Akāl Purakh, (28) Sat Nām (29) and Eckankar (30) to describe this creator

It is God who endows this world with its purposiveness by creating the world in accordance with His absolute Will. The world is not the product of chance but exhibits an intelligibility derived from God's perfect plan. The implicit claim here is that the intelligibility of the universe constitutes a good reason for believing in the existence of God.

Accordingly one can foresee the argument that while God exists in independence of everything else, everything else which exists has come into being as a consequence of a free act on God's part. The notion that God sustains all means, for Bābā Sawan Singh, that everything other than God which exists is radically dependent on God, not only for its original existence but also for its continued existence. He stresses that:

He is the doer, responsible both
for the creation of the universe
and the process of creating it.
He is Himself the creation. There
is nothing else beside Him. He is
both cause and the effect. (31)

We have said that Bābā Sawan Singh discusses creation in a theological setting that only makes sense with the concept of an all-powerful omniscient creator. His creation doctrine maintains that an infinite deity created existence out of Himself and preserves in being the finite universe. (32) Creation is seen in the Gurmat Siddhānt as a coming into being of a reality not previously known. It is not an illusion or mere appearance of something, it is a new being, the creation of what had not previously existed. This creation, in Bābā Sawan Singh's view is not an emanation or transformation of a pre-existing reality, but by the power of a creator the emergence of something real from the void.

We need to examine what can be said of Bābā Sawan Singh's practice of conceiving the doctrine of creation as a natural adjunct of his idea of God as the most exalted creator. If he conceives God as being more exalted than any other being by virtue of the fact that He is radically independent of every thing else, then it is easy to see why God would also be conceived in relation to the doctrine of creation. In the first place, the more everything else is thought of as the result of a free, voluntary act on God's part, the more independent God will naturally be thought to be. (33) Furthermore if God is thought of in accordance with the doctrine of creation, he becomes the source of all the dazzling beauty of the natural order. God will also be viewed as the most exalted One provided He is conceived as both omnipresent and omniscient. This Bābā Sawan Singh does repeatedly and he uses this idea to explain the limitlessness of God as creator. This he does with the following statement:

The Lord is beyond time and timelessness, high and separate. All creation is under His orders, yet He is not the doer. He is beyond form and formlessness. He is omnipresent and the sustainer of all; creator, immovable, all-powerful, imperishable, redeemer of sinners, unknowable, inaccessible, without beginning, eternal and pure consciousness. (34)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt fleeting reference is also made to the destructive functions of the God the creator. (35) Having brought the world into being, God watches over it and cares for it and also destroys and recreates it. God is therefore conceived as an active participant in the life of the universe which he has established in that He is declared to be its destroyer and recreator. (36)

In not accepting the idea of creatio-ex-nihilo, Bābā Sawan Singh, like his Sant counterparts subscribes to the concept of creation out of something which emphasises the complete dependence on God of a particular being. In linking the idea of causality with the notion of a creator- God Bābā Sawan Singh lends credence to the idea of a creator-God that preserves the universe. This idea focuses on the creator maintaining the creation. We can speak here of a God dwelling within creation not only as constitutive of its being but, as the concept of conservation implies, as keeping it in existence, and in the case of human beings at least, as lighting up their lives and directing their ends with special providential care and love. (37) In the Gurmat Siddhānt we are therefore presented with the idea of a God entering into an extraordinarily close relationship with His creatures and becoming existentially united with them. (38)

The Names of the Creator

In the Gurmat Siddhānt we find a compendium names used for the creator God. In principle these names are those found in the Ādi Granth. However, there is also evidence to suggest that Bābā Sawan Singh uses names that are a familiar feature of Kabīr-panthī writings.

Sat Purus

The idea of God as a creative personality, as Bābā Sawan Singh sees it, is taken from the Ādi Granth. However, Sat Purus, one of the names used in the Gurmat Siddhānt to describe the deity is a Kabīrian and Kabīr-panthī variant of the Vedic term purusa, (39) which Bābā Sawan Singh provides, with a distinctly Rādhāsoāmī flavour peculiar to the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. In this text Shiv Dayāl Singh uses the term as it appears in the Kabīr-panthī Anurāg Sāgar. Here Sat Purus denotes the primordial Being who resides in Sat Lok, the highest cosmic plane. (40)

In the myth underlying Kabīr's Bijak, Sat Purus is conceived as the one Essential Being, the True Person who of His Will created the universe and the six dhanis (presiding deities) - Onkār, Sahaḥ, Ichcha, Sohang, Achint and Achchha who were each given a world and the souls to populate it. (41)

In another verse attributed to Kabīr in the Vancnāvalī collection, Kabīr sees Sat Purus as the ultimate supreme creator responsible for the creation of the lower deity Kāl Purus, the diabolical personage who created the lower worlds and the three deities of the Hindu triad, the four Vedas, the six Śāstras and the eighteen Purānas. (42)

The rare practice of equating Sat Purus with Nirāñjan (the immaculate One) is an exception rather than the rule and is repeated only on two occasions in the Kabīr Granthāvalī. (43) This practice is followed by Bābā Sawan Singh in the Gurmat Siddhānt. (44) It is to be noted that though Kabīr used "Rāmā" and "Allah" and other names for the supreme God, modern Kabīr-panthīs seldom, if ever, do so, at least in their writings; but almost invariably use the term Sat Purus. Kabīr is said to have referred to himself as Sat Purus in Sukh Nidhān. The Sukh Nidhān is a Kabīr-panthī text published some one hundred and fifty years later than the Bīlak, probably by the Chattisgarh Kabīr-panthīs. (45)

Ādi Nirāñjan

Bābā Sawan Singh (46) employs the term Ādi Nirāñjan used commonly by the Nirāñjana School. (47) Derived from the term Alakh Nirāñjana, is a concept meaning the ultimate supreme creator. The Nāth yogis also talk here of Alakh Nāth (the unseeable One). The Gorakhbānīs clearly express the belief that the divine self-expression is none other than Alakh (alaksana) ("without any

distinctive marks") or Nirāñjan (nirāñjana) ("without impurity").
(48)

It is correct to say that as a representative of the modern Sant tradition, Bābā Sawan Singh's main sources of influence has been the Nāths. But it is also equally important to keep in mind the fact that the idea of Nirāñjan as the supreme Being in His absolute state has an antecedent in Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature. There exists for example, a similar idea of the creator in the Vedic texts. In these texts he is called Prajāpati, Brahmā or Viśvakarman respectively.

In Vedic literature we find that since the vast universal process could not be explained with reference to the well-known gods, there was naturally a tendency to conceive of a greater God who represents no particular aspect or force of nature, but a unified conception representing something like the totality of the forces. He is the first radiant manifestation of the supreme unmanifested One. (49)
Though Prajāpati has been conceived in Vedic literature in a cosmological setting different to that of the Rādhāsoāmī faith, Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of Ādi Nirāñjan undoubtedly shares the same idea of cosmic supremacy as the Vedic ṛsis had designated to Prajāpati. (49)

Nirāṅkār

Nirāṅkār is another name used in the Gurmat Siddhānt to describe God the creator. It is used by Bābā Sawan Singh much in the same way as

Gurū Nānak uses it. For Gurū Nānak and for all consequent Sikh thought, Nirāṅkār (the formless One) is one of the most important names of the creator-God. (50) However, despite leaning heavily on the Sikh scriptures Bābā Sawan Singh does not use the term in conjunction with Nirāṅkārī. (51) This is a term that Gurū Nānak uses in association with the idea of spiritual salvation. (52)

Akāl Purakh

We now come to the final name used in the Gurmat Siddhānt to describe the creator. Once again we find Bābā Sawan Singh duplicating its meaning and usage as found in the Sikh scriptures. Like Gurū Nānak, (53) Bābā Sawan Singh uses the name to denote God's eternal character. Both wish to stress with this name, that, as opposed to the fickle, destructible world, there stands an eternal, constant God. The concept of timelessness, used in the Sikh scriptures (54) to emphasize the non-incarnated nature of God is also used in the Gurmat Siddhānt. Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say about the timeless Being:

He is deathless. He is beyond the reach of time and death. Time has three components: past, present and future. The entire universe is confined within these limits. All take birth, grow and die within them. The One is, however, beyond the sphere of time. He is immortal, unborn and eternal for He is without beginning or end. (55)

Bābā Sawan Singh is saying that to be incarnated means to be involved in death which is the ultimate antithesis of God's own eternal being.

God is conceived as being beyond death and transmigration. This means that God is totally detached from all that is unstable, mutable and corruptible. He is the unmovable, eternal reality. (56)

Like the Sikh Gurūs Bābā Sawan Singh would also argue that the timeless God is not the God of philosophical truth, confined by space and time but an ineffable God of eternity. This notion of timelessness that Bābā Sawan Singh wishes to portray is aptly described by N. K. Jain. Referring to the concept of Akāl Purakh, he writes:

He walks into the house of space and time
and goes out of it at will. He does not
age at the touch of time. He does not fall
at its knock. The clock of time has to run
in the reverse order if He so wills. Time
is nothing more than a clock hanging on
His wall and space is no more than the
window through which He sees the conste-
llation and the universe which He created
and which are a source of delight to Him (57)

Bābā Sawan Singh would agree with Jain that to simply call God the timeless One might not be enough. To say that God is beyond time may seem like limiting God to some kind of space which is beyond the bounds of time for time is basically spatial. But God is not only beyond time but beyond space as well. For a being to be such in a real and graspable sense, another quality is needed, namely, that of moving freely inside and outside the matrix of space and time and being affected in no way by them. The term Akāl Purakh, used by Gurū Nānak as well as Bābā Sawan Singh fits this description of the timeless God. It talks of a creator who is the wonderful One, who

appears at will inside and outside the folds of space and time without being affected in any way.

If the seeker's affection is transferred from the world to God, the result is a relationship which endures to eternity, and the seeker who is united with God in such a relationship is seen as himself participating in God's immortality. This is Bābā Sawan Singh's appeal, that the seeker should abandon wordly attachments and attach himself to the eternally tranquil and immutable God. (58)

The Relationship between God and the Universe

The idea underlying Baba Sawan Singh's views on the relationship of God to the universe is one relating to divine self - projection. (59) In the Upanisads (60) and the Purāṇas (61) we find the idea that the whole universe with its plurality of beings is attributed to a creator- God who is seen as "desiring" to become many, modifying and diversifying His own being in order to bring the universe into existence. God is seen as the universal cause, both substantial and efficient, of the universe. (62) Bābā Sawan Singh subscribes to this idea of the world as the body of God. (63) It is the idea of God's immanent transcendence that motivates him to formulate this belief. (64) He conceives God as the inner principle of the universe, in which He dwells as the source of being. For Bābā Sawan Singh, God is specifically immanent in one part of creation, i.e. in the human heart. (65)

It could also be said of Bābā Sawan Singh that he adheres to Rāmānuja's Satkāryavāda doctrine which states that the effect exists in a potential state within the cause. Like Rāmānuja he accepts the idea that the act of causation is an actualization of the potentiality inherent in the cause itself. What he is proposing is the identity of cause and effect. Much in the same vein as Rāmānuja, he sees emanative causation from its relational aspect, due weight being given to both cause and effect as real and are "substantially the same". It is argued in the Gurmat Siddhānt that a real substance in the cause remains a real substance in the effect and that the change of form itself is a real process, implying a real relationship between cause and effect. (66) Such a doctrine implies that the relationship between God and the world is inseparable. Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of God as inextricably related to the finite universe leads him frequently to stress the cosmic dimension of God. God's being includes all beings. As such He is the self-existent Being from whom all originates and upon whom all depends. As His body, the universe is the expressive attribute of His person. While it is theoretically possible to define God's being without reference to His creation, there is no possibility of defining the latter's existence without reference to its relationship to God upon which it depends for its being. This becomes evident when we examine the various statements made in the Gurmat Siddhānt about God's omnipresent agency. (67) Bābā Sawan Singh understands the inner pervasiveness of God to be the means by which God accomplishes His control over the universe. His main thought here is that without God's life giving presence within, the universe could not function.

The Relationship between God and the Soul

Since no elaborate theoretical perspective is developed by Bābā Sawan Singh regarding the God-soul relationship it is difficult to make any extensive pronouncements about it. However, there are occasions where he presents his views about the God-soul relationship. In the Gurnat Siddhānt we read that:

The soul is a particle of the Lord.
It occupies the highest position in
creation. All spring from the
same Light, and His Light is reflected
in all. There can be no difference
between the part and the whole. All
have sprung from the same stock. (68)

This statement reminds us of Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. (69) This philosophy was later reaffirmed by Sants like Kabīr. (70) It has also been intergrated into the Rādhāsoāmī doctrine by Shiv Dayāl Singh. (71) In the Gurnat Siddhānt the individual soul is seen as being utterly dependent on God. (72) It is an attribute of God. The soul is seen as dential with God yet also different from God. And because it is identical as well as different from God, the relation between them is that of identity-qualified-by-difference.

The central idea in the Gurnat Siddhānt is that the soul is a part of God, the body of God, the mode of God, an attribute or qualification of God. However, no matter what description is used, his interpretation of the God-soul relationship will, in all probability, echo the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. Barthwal's observation about Shiv Dayāl Singh's interpretation of the

part-whole theory can be used to explain Bābā Sawan Singh's views on the God-soul relationship. Barthwal argues that for Shiv Dayāl Singh the soul can be a part of God only in the sense of the latter being immeasurably greater than and the sole possessor of the former and the sole master of its destiny. (73) God therefore controls, supports and directs the soul.

For Bābā Sawan Singh identity is the key component in the God-soul relationship. He sees the individual soul as being organically related to God. It forms the body of God and possesses its own individuality and merely qualifies God, and as a mode is different from Him. In the state of mystical union the soul is seen as partaking of God, and not as merging in God. It shares His glory and greatness. It enjoys, like God, infinite consciousness and infinite bliss, which is the essence of God. However, like Shiv Dayāl Singh, Bābā Sawan Singh pleads for a union of the soul with God whereby the soul maintains its separate identity, "for God is God and soul is soul".

(74)

The Divine Attributes

The statement that appears in the Gurmat Siddhānt regarding God's supreme perfection, expresses a belief shared by all Sants. It is expressed in the Japjī which contains the Sikh Gurūs' hymn of praise to the supreme God. In the Gurmat Siddhānt Bābā Sawan Singh chooses to describe the ultimate supremacy of God in the following manner:

The Lord is beyond time and timelessness, high and separate. All the creation is under His orders, yet He is not the doer. He is beyond form and formlessness. He is omnipresent and the sustainer of all; creator, immovable, all-powerful, imperishable, redeemer of sinners, unknowable, inaccessible, without beginning, eternal and pure consciousness. He is everlasting, invulnerable, a storehouse of knowledge and nectar, without attributes, kind to devotees, self-existent, apart from all, an ocean of sweetness and omnipresent. (75)

Bābā Sawan Singh supports the commonly held theistic view that God is not like other beings. God is conceived of as the only Being who is truly self-sufficient and self-sustaining. As the uncaused necessary Being, He alone is the reason for His own existence. Being self-sufficient He lacks nothing. He is most perfect. Bābā Sawan Singh's theological vision culminates in the claim that God is that than which no greater can be conceived. This idea is intended to express the necessity of God's existence for the existence of other beings.

The Attribute of Consciousness

Though he does not use a similar vocabulary, Bābā Sawan Singh's idea about God as pure consciousness echoes that of Śaṅkara. (76) Bābā Sawan Singh posits the view that God is eternal, absolute, unchanging consciousness, the nature of which is pure and undifferentiated and free from all distinctions. (77) By talking of God as pure consciousness, he attempts to bring out the unqualified nature of God

in His transcendent perfection. But what are the ramifications of such a statement ?

If God is pure consciousness it implies that God is self-luminous consciousness underlying and illumining phenomenal forms of consciousness. We have here the idea of God manifesting Himself to Himself in a spatial and temporal order. Nothing can be rationally conceived as having any existence without reference to this underlying reality. God as pure consciousness therefore takes on the character of witness consciousness. God is seen as underlying and witnessing all the conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious states and processes of the empirical world. It is He who illuminates and unifies all its temporal changes and modifications. The consciousness which witnesses all temporal processes and changes and sees them arranged in time cannot itself be regarded as one of the temporal processes. It must be seen to be a supra-temporal experiencer of time, a changeless seer of changes. It must be regarded as a transcendent illuminator. It throws light on all temporal phenomena, without itself being subject to any temporal change.

The Attribute of Truth

In the Gurmat Siddhant it is argued that God's existence is absolute and supreme. It is He who remains changeless in the changing world. (78) He is therefore Sat-Purus, "the true Being", the "real of reals" or "the truth of truths." (79) What Bābā Sawan Singh is actually

saying here is that God is truth.. By this is meant that God as truth, has as His essence the divine quality of all pervasiveness. Bābā Sawan Singh understands the all pervasiveness of the supreme Lord to be the means by which He accomplishes His control over the universe. The central idea here is that without God's life-giving presence, the universe would not "truly" exist. A similar idea is expressed in the Adi Granth. (80)

Bābā Sawan Singh's sees truth as being beyond the transcendent-immanent aspect of God. As the ultimate supreme Lord, God is seen as being immanent in the three worlds (81) and having His abode in the fourth. (82) What is meant here is that God has not spent Himself in pervading the physical, astral and causal worlds but is beyond them in His absolute true state wherein even the attribute "immanence" would not apply to Him. To call God real or true is to suggest that His existence is unconditional. God is seen as being the ground of all reality and everything depends for its existence on Him. (83) God is therefore existing in Himself. He does not change and there is never any diminution of His nature. God is truth because He is reality.

The Attribute of Ineffability

Bābā Sawan Singh's conception of God as an absolute transcendent totality suggests that God cannot be described in terms appropriate to the human condition. (84) How then can He be comprehended? Is it possible for human understanding to grasp the nature of God, or must

we be content with defining Him in negatives as already discussed earlier on in this chapter ?

In presenting his idea of the ineffability of God, Bābā Sawan Singh appears to accept the "beyond description" thesis for the two reasons. He believes that there is a certain kind of ineffable experience which all believers must have. He also subscribes to the view that God is indescribable because He is transcendent. (85)

The Attribute of Infinity

In the theism of the Gurmat Siddhant God is considered to be infinite. According to this view God's freedom from limitations means that He can be present anywhere at His own will. The power responsible for the universe must be omniscient and He cannot be omniscient if He does not possess the capacity to be present anywhere at any time. God's infinitude also suggests that He is the all-inclusive whole in the sense that nothing can remain outside and independent of Him. (86) For Bābā Sawan Singh God is revealed in all things. In his view everything can be said to be included in God in the sense that they are all referable to and dependent on Him. Bābā Sawan Singh speaks of God pervading "the entire universe and that the universe is in Him". (87) God's freedom from temporal limitations does not imply for Bābā Sawan Singh that God has no connection with the temporal world. For as the personal creator of the world He is intimately connected with the temporal process.

Otherwise, He could not be its guardian. God is the coordinating ground of all temporal events and as their ground He must transcend them. What includes or coordinates time, or events or happenings in time, must for that very reason, transcend time.

The Attribute of Eternality

In Bābā Sawan Singh's view, it is part of the infinitude of God that He is free from temporal limitations. There may be different ways that this divine attribute may be understood and interpreted. Much depends on how we perceive the relationship of an eternal God to the changing events of the world. Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas on God's eternality are based on a superficial, often repetitive paraphrasing of verses from the Adi Granth.

In attributing eternity to God one is faced with the question of how God who transcends time can include it. When we take up the question of the relation of God to temporal events of the world, the three senses in which the relation of eternity to time and, therefore, of God to the world is conceived, present themselves to us. In the first sense of the term, eternity stands for endless duration or an unending extent of time. The second meaning of the term eternity is its essential timelessness. In the third sense when we say that God is eternal we mean that God Himself is timeless, He somehow includes and transcends time. (88)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt it is suggested that God is the permanent principle who rules and controls all things in time, outside of time. God is eternal in the sense that He transcends time. But it is also in time that God becomes functionally related to human souls. It is through this relationship that the world is given a place and meaning in the total structure of reality itself. This position is characterized by the view that it is God's ever-presentness that gives reality to existence. Bābā Sawan Singh teaches that "no place is without Him. He is the beginning, the middle and the end". (89)

The Attribute of Omnipotence

Careful examination of the Gurmat Siddhānt will reveal that power is postulated as one of the essential factors that evokes a sense of worship in God. Man confronts God who is the source of all power. Religious devotion can only be inspired by a God who possesses supreme value and power. Power is that which evokes and supports religious feelings and no conception of God can satisfy man's religious cravings without being associated with supreme power. Bābā Sawan Singh certainly sees God as the inexhaustible source of power. He emphasizes the fundamental theistic position that God is essentially of the nature of will. This belief comes to light in the following statement:

The Lord is the Creator of the entire universe. He does not have to depend on anyone for this purpose. He has created everything by His own Will. (90)

God's omnipresence and omniscience are inevitable implications of His attribute of omnipotence. (91) It is by virtue of His power that He is not subject to limitations. We may understand omnipotence as the unlimited power in God by virtue of which He can do whatever does not contradict His nature or His character. Lewis aptly describes what Bābā Sawan Singh tries to put across to the reader about God being free in His omnipotence :

The freedom of God consists in the fact that no cause other than Himself produces His acts and that His goodness is the root from which they all grow and His own omnipotence the air in which they all flower. (92)

The Attribute of Omniscience

In God, knowledge is without limitation. He knows all things eternally, His knowledge is immediate and integral and relates to all things. Omniscience is His attribute. Bābā Sawan Singh sees the personal relationship between God and man as based upon God's unlimited knowledge of things. (93) Omniscience is not an improper pronouncement on God's nature. According to Bābā Sawan Singh if the universe is not ruled by chance or if human beings with their fragmentary knowledge cannot be the cause of the universe, the only alternative is that of an omniscient God. We are thus made to see God as the only Being capable of ruling the events of the universe.

Bābā Sawan Singh goes on to inform us that divine foreknowledge does not amount to a denial of free will. He is of the conviction that

divine omniscience and human freedom are reconcilable. God the omniscient mind knows the way in which the finite mind works but this does not mean that He prevents the exercise of free will. He makes finite beings participate in His power and freedom, even if in a limited manner. (94) He does not believe that the only will that exists is God's will. He grants separate and independent wills to finite beings. We are told that God is omniscient in that He dwells in all hearts (95) and that finite selves have the fortune of divine counsel (96) but this neither deprives God of His omniscience, nor finite selves of their freedom of will.

The Attribute of Self-Existence

One of the most important of God's attributes which constitutes His fullness is His self-determining, self-existent nature. In the Gurnat Siddhant we find a reference to God's divine total independence. This is intended to point to the way in which God contrasts with all other beings. All others are dependent upon His will and power. (97)

Although Bābā Sawan Singh lists self-existence as but one of a number of attributes of God, it is this special quality which distinguishes Him most clearly, focussing attention as it does on His essential sovereignty, His omnipotent will, His all-pervading control, in a word His unconditioned being as God. (98)

The Attribute of Redemption

The Gurmat Siddhānt does not portray God as an indifferent personal power. On the contrary, he portrays Him as the very Being that sustains the universe. This enables us to realize that the events of the world are not a meaningless succession but reveal a moral and religious order. The pursuit of goodness is the divine commandment and is the will of God. God-realization is the paramount message of all Sants. In Rādhāsoāmī circles there is talk of the soul returning to its "original home". In the Gurmat Siddhānt one is repeatedly reminded of this ultimate duty which is summed up in the following passage:

The purpose of human life is to achieve
communion with the Lord by engaging in
and remaining happy in His remembrance
and by loving Him and His creation. (99)

For Bābā Sawan Singh God is the guardian of the moral order governing the universe. For him the universe is created not by an arbitrary and whimsical despot but by a benevolent supreme creator who has due regard for the realization of goodness in the world. Both power and goodness are centred in God. Neither of these predicates can be severed from God for without them we fail to understand the concept of God. Power without goodness in Baba Sawan Singh's eyes lapses into recklessness while goodness without power sets up a weak God who cannot even control the sphere of operation of goodness itself.

Bābā Sawan Singh tells us that God is love. (100) The function of love is redemption and in order to give effect to this nature of His, He, of His own accord, creates the universe and enters into a loving relationship with finite selves. God is seen as taking His seat in the heart of man. His dwelling there as our inner controller is an act of supreme kindness and a token of His unlimited divine grace. We are presented with a picture of a God who constantly watches over our inner life, sits in the innermost recesses of our hearts, dispels the darkness which consists in man's attachment to the world of desire. God, by means of his total, unlimited foreknowledge, awakens in men the knowledge of His qualities and attributes and presents Himself as their sole object of devotion and as their agent of redemption. God's blissful nature exhibits itself in the souls of men by making love the principle of His divine self-expression. Here we see the descent of God into the hearts of men being propounded as the outward expression of God's transcendent joyful existence. God, we are told gives and never takes and in the functioning of His attributes, there cannot remain even the slightest tinge of selfishness. Compassion consequently is that divine attribute which is manifested in divine selflessness. Divine love is seen as having no wants, no needs and depends only on divine goodness. It is pure love simple and untouched, and creation is a manifestation of divine compassion. (101)

The Concept of the Divine Self - Expression

In our earlier discussion of the mystery of God we discussed the question of "apprehending God within the human heart". This notion is of primary significance for it is at this point that there is communication between God and man. That God should speak to man through his heart is itself a remarkable doctrine, and one which in a general sense is accepted by all Sants. It is when we proceed to enquire precisely how God communicates with man that we encounter Bābā Sawan Singh's specific debt to Gurū Nānak in the form of the doctrine of divine self-expression, one of the three cardinal pillars of the Rādhāsoāmī doctrine. (102)

Our analysis here concerns two key concepts, Śabd (103) and Nām, (104) both of which bear a basic identity. They are two different terms which express different aspects of the same concept. Both are used to expound the nature of divine self-expression.

The Principle of Śabd

Bābā Sawan Singh's entire treatment of Śabd (and Nām) centres primarily on his interpretation of their treatment in the Sikh scriptures. However, it must be pointed out that unlike Gurū Nānak and the earlier Sants (105) he not only describes Śabd in terms of what it does but also in terms of what it is. In so doing Bābā Sawan Singh duplicates the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh. In the Gurnat

Siddhānt we find his treatment of the principle and practice of Śabd as the celestial sound current, (106) conceived as being expressive of God's creative activity and as having specific salvational qualities. Puri has this to say about the qualities of Śabd:

The Transcendental Divine Harmony is the final source of all consciousness and super conscious processes and states of everything, physical, mental, spiritual, supra-spiritual and all. Shabd is the ultimate Being and final Source and Essence of all Reality. (107)

Puri's commentary on Shiv Dayāl Singh's definition (108) of Śabd, (109) seen here as the all pervading reality is a fitting introduction to the way in which Bābā Sawan Singh conceives of the term. Both Shiv Dayāl Singh and Bābā Sawan Singh share the same understanding of the term as the self-expression of the Divine. Bābā Sawan Singh says:

The beginning and the end of all things is Shabd. All gross matter, the sky and so forth, subtle matter, sound, form, taste and scent all are Shabd. Whatever exists is Shabd. Whatever is manifested from Shabd cannot be anything but Shabd. Shabd is our creator, Shabd is our sustainer. We are of Shabd and Shabd is ours. The Gurus say that Shabd is the Supreme Lord. (110)

Both authors perceive Śabd as the essence of creation. In the Gurnat Siddhānt we read that:

Before the creation, the Shabd was unmanifested and nameless. It then existed in itself. In that state it was called indescribable, nameless, invisible, unfathomable, unutterable and inexpressible. When it became manifest it became known as Nam (<Name of God>) or Shabd. (111)

Both view Śabd as the creative power, the one reality behind all appearances, manifested as sound and light (112) in the spiritual regions. (113) Śabd is also called Amrit (114) and Hari Ras (115) in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

The emphasis that Bābā Sawan Singh and his Sant predecessors place on the role of Śabd in creation is not a novel one, for the roots of such a use of the term date back to the early Hindu principle of Vāk. (116) Basu's informative study provides us with the basis of such an observation. She lucidly demonstrates how Vāk, personified as a sort of mother goddess, is presented in the Brāhmanas. She also furnishes the reader with references to Vāk as the mother of the Vedas and the centre-point of immortality, a sort of link between God and man. (117) We are also told that in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (118) and in the Maitrī Upaniṣad (119) Vāk is identified with Brahman. Basu also mentions of the Laws of Manu where Brahmā is said to have created the words of the Vedas from which everything was created. (120)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt we also find Śabd being conceived as the agent of creation. Bābā Sawan Singh confers upon Śabd a metaphysical status in a manner not unknown in the Vedic tradition, (121) while expounding his Rādhāsoāmī theory of creative power of the celestial sound current. (122) His definition of Śabd as "the celestial melody, the life current which originates from the Lord and pervades everything" (123) reminds us of a similar definition used by Siddha and Nāth yogīs. (124) Like the Rādhāsoāmī Satgurūs they subscribe

to the theory of divine descent within the context of the emanative theory of creation. (125)

All Tāntric sādhanā is characterized by the importance given to sound (śabda) and to magic formulas and diagrams known as mantras and yantras. For the Tāntrikas, śabda is not only a "proof" leading to the apprehension of the supreme Being, it is itself divine as the "sound-form" of the supreme Energy. They firmly believe in the supreme potency of the śabdabrahman, the eternal, undifferentiated sound in which the yogī should be ultimately be reabsorbed. Śabda has two aspects : nāda, resonance, or vibration which in its highest, purest state is anāhata, (unstruck) and bindu (point, drop of energy) which is born of nāda and concentrates all divine energy in itself

Like most of his Rāhdāsoāmī brethen, Bābā Sawan Singh conceives of Śabd as the transcendent divine consciousness which is present in the entire universe. The descent of Śabd is viewed as God's manifested body which pervades the entire universe and in which God "enjoys" himself. He concludes that divine existence, divine knowledge, divine power, divine beauty, divine magnificence, divine love and magnanimity are all perfectly unified in Śabd. These qualities become phenomenally manifested in diverse forms and under different conditions and limitations in the cosmic system in which God chooses to express His being. (126)

Bhaṭṭarhari, (127) grammarian and chief exponent of Śabdapūrvayoga (yoga of the word). (128)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt this salvational function of Śabd also takes on a central role in that it is presented as providing the justification for the practice of Śabd Yoga. (129) The function of Śabd, as Bābā Sawan Singh sees it, is one of providing the means whereby the devotee can know both God and the path that leads to Him. Repeatedly he declares it to be the essential means to salvation. In what appears to be a reference to Surat Śabd Yoga (yoga of the celestial sound current) (130) he proclaims the practice of listening (131) to the all pervading (132) inner melody by turning inwards (133) in order to experience the reality of celestial sound and light (134) within (135) at the third eye centre (136) to be the only meaningful method of experiencing Śabd, "the true treasure". His elucidation of the term Śabd is done in conjunction with two other terms, namely Anhad Śabd (137) and pañch Śabd, (138) both terms with histories of their own.

Theories about mystical sounds are very ancient in India. The Maitrī Upaniṣad (VI.22) for example, describes a mystical sound experience. Of the later Upaniṣads, the Nāda-bindu Upaniṣad describes in detail the various sounds (nādas) which are supposed to be heard during yogic exercises. But just as all nādas should ultimately be absorbed into the essential nāda which is the anāhata-nāda, the "unstruck sound", so all mantrajapa (repetition of mantras) should be reabsorbed into sahaja (the ineffable state of mystical union) which implies the

abolition of japa. Sahajajapa, which corresponds to the transcendental sahaja state is called ajapājapa by the Nāthpanthīs. This terminology is adopted by Kabīr and replicated in the Sant tradition. Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the term "Anahad Shabd" does not, in essence depart from its Nāth usage and is very much in keeping with what Tulsī Sāhib calls "unstruck music". (139) However, most of the references in the Gurmat Siddhānt are taken from the Ādi Granth. (140) But although Bābā Sawan Singh absorbs the Nāth usage of the term, the experience which it expresses for him is in no way similar to that of the Nāths. Like Kabīr he probably sees it as a useful figure of speech which is in no way linked with the Nāth practice of Haṭha yoga. There is no mention of kuṇḍalinī or for that matter, idā or pingalā. Instead we see a categorical denial of any such association. Bābā Sawan Singh's contention that Śabd is independent of prāṇa is a clear indication of this. (141)

In order to fully comprehend his references to the term pañch Śabd (the five Śabds), we must understand of Bābā Sawan Singh's interpretation of the Rādhāsoāmī metaphysics of sound as seen from the Beas perspective. This in turn is linked to the Rādhāsoāmī account of creation. This will be discussed in the following chapter. We shall limit our observation here to the fact that the term as used in the Gurmat Siddhānt receives the same treatment as it does in the Ādi Granth. Here the term used as one of the key terms in Sikh theology. The experience of the five Śabds believed to be the divine self-manifestation is said to be obtained through meditation. (142)

It is Bābā Sawan Singh's firm belief that the practice of listening to the Sabd is the only true way of spiritual salvation for the devotee.

He writes:

The Gurbani says that the best of all practices is the practice of listening to the Shabd. This is acceptable to the Lord and leads to salvation.

Man can attain salvation only by means of the Shabd. Through it alone man turns from glass into gold and is transformed from poison into nectar. (143)

It is through the practice of Sabd Yoga that the soul is seen as ascending to higher regions and finally achieving spiritual liberation. This is how the process is described:

The Shabd is conscious and consciousness. It is a wave of the ocean of the Lord and a man is a particle of His Being. He is related to Him as a part is related to the whole. The Lord is the ocean of superconsciousness, and Shabd is its wave. The soul is a drop of this ocean. The wave of superconsciousness or Shabd attracts the conscious soul towards it and absorbs it. Until the soul, with the help of the Shabd, rises to its Original Home, it cannot achieve salvation. The Gurbani tells us that the Lord is eternal and can be realized only through the practice of listening to the divine Sound. (144)

We are also told that the practice of Sabd brings untold benefits, (145) the mind is stilled and the ego tamed (146) and "the five evils" brought under control (147) thus paving the way for a life of bliss and eternal happiness.

But how is this spiritual salvation via the Sabd to be realized? Bābā Sawan Singh's answer to this question centres on the role of the

Satgurū whose very existence is seen as a form of divine grace. (148) We are told that it is the Satgurū who makes the Śabd manifest to the disciple during initiation whereby he is taught the secret of how to listen to the internal Śabd reverberating at the third eye center. (149) The paramount importance of the Satgurū in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition is further affirmed in the Gurmat Siddhānt with references to the Satgurū as the inner voice of God. (150)

In spite of Bābā Sawan Singh's repeated emphasis on the importance of the Satgurū as "Shabd giver" and his references to the Sikh scriptures (151) he surprisingly does not develop the concept of gurū kā śabad (gurū's śabad). For Gurū Nānak sabad is gurū Kā śabad or gurū upades' (152) which is that expression of God's truth that expresses the nature of God and the means of attaining Him. (153)

Finally, we are informed that it is the gurūmukh, "that rare devotee" (154) who leads a God-centred life, and who sits at "the feet of the Master", (155) who "gives up the mind and its base desires", (156) who "soars upwards to the spiritual regions". (157) It is therefore not the lot of the manmukh or self-centred individual with "his restless mind to taste the divine nectar of Shabd". (158)

The Principle of Nām

The belief in the divine nature of the Name and in its infinite potency as a means of salvation is common to the medieval Vaiṣṇava and Sant tradition. The common Vaiṣṇava belief in the quasi-magical power of the divine Name is demonstrated in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, especially in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In a number of Purāṇic legends, such as the legend of Ajāmila, the name of the God Viṣṇu is shown to possess salvific powers. (159) Also in the Jñānesvarī of the so-called Ādi Sant Jñānesvar there are repeated instances of the power of the divine Name. However, the most lucid and complete exposition of the doctrine of the Name as the hypostasis of the supreme Being is to be found in the prologue of Tulsī Dās's Rāmcharitmānas. Here we find Tulsī Dās not hesitating to vindicate the superiority of the Name over the nirguna and saguna aspects of the deity. (160)

The divine Name is indeed a key concept and one which expresses a central doctrine of the Rādhāsoāmī faith. It is moreover a term which retains its primacy throughout the Gurmat Siddhānt. The concept of Nām, however, can be discussed with greater brevity than Sabd, not because it is any less important, but because for all practical purposes it is synonymous with Sabd. (161) Both are considered to be examples of divine self-expression, objects of contemplation, and the standard by which the seeker must lead his life.

In order to stress the importance of Nām, Bābā Sawan Singh quotes from the Ādi Granth and writes:

Repetition, austerities, knowledge, meditation,
 Commentaries on the six Shastras and the Smritis,
 The practice of Yoga, the performance of rituals,
 Renunciation and wandering about in the forests,
 And all other kinds of efforts,
 And deeds of charity and piety and oblations to
 the sacred fire,
 And cutting up of the body and offering each bit
 as sacrifice,
 And keeping fast and other deeds of merit;
 These equal not meditation on the Lord's Name.
 O Nanak ! after hearing the Name only once from a
 Perfect Master (at the time of initiation).
 If one scans the nine regions of the world and
 live long;
 And becomes a great and detached ascetic;
 And offers his life to the fire;
 And gives away gold, horses, elephants and land
 in charity,
 And practices inner washings and yogic postures,
 And disciplines himself with hard practices like
 a Jain,
 And has himself cut in pieces bit by bit,
 But does not get rid of the dirt of his ego,
 None of these equals the Name of the Lord. (162)

In the Gurnat Siddhānt the emphasis given to the supremacy of the
 divine Name is similar to that found in the Sukhmani of Gurū Arjan
 quoted above. (163) The divine Name is considered unique, though the
 actual names by which the supreme Lord is called are many. Bābā Sawan
 Singh sticks to the word Nām in describing the eternal essence of God.

The term Nām is used to express the whole nature of God, His complete
 totality. Anything which may be affirmed concerning God is conceived
 under the rubric Nām. (164) Because God is all powerful it follows
 that omnipotence is a part of the divine Name. Because God knows all
 things, omniscience is similarly seen as being a feature of Nām. The
 many and varied qualities which may be attached to God are therefore

regarded as aspects of Nām. (165) Bābā Sawan Singh does not see any difference between the Name and the Named. (166)

Although he quotes extensively from the Ādi Granth, Bābā Sawan Singh's attempts to clarify the difference between Varatmak Nām (the expressible Name) and Dhuniatmik Nām (the inexpressible Name) rest basically on the Kabīrian distinction (167) between the attributive Name and the essential Name, presented in the Radhasoami format by Shiv Dayāl Singh. (168) It is correct to say that Bābā Sawan Singh abides by Shiv Dayāl Singh's definitions of Varatmak Nām and Dhuniatmik Nām. Shiv Dayāl Singh highlights the differences that are seen to exist between the transcendental Name and the attributive names of the divine Being. For both Shiv Dayāl Singh and Bābā Sawan Singh it is the transcendental Name that enjoys the salvational role as opposed to the attributive names which are downgraded to names of symbolic value, important only for their ritualistic significance.

The Practice of Nām

An important qualification that Bābā Sawan Singh attributes to God is that in His mercy God desires that all men be freed from the anguish of transmigration. He therefore sets before them the means of achieving this end. The means of liberation enunciated in the Gurnat Siddhānt appears in the form of a plea that enjoins all men to bring their lives into harmony with the divine Name. (169) Bābā Sawan Singh believes that regular devotion coupled with strict virtue

can lead a person to living his life in accordance with the nature of God, i.e. Nām. (170) This involves the earnest seeker in spiritual ascent, which culminates in liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. (171)

The fact that God in His grace offers Nām to all who would accept it does not mean that it can be obtained without effort. (172) He who wishes to appropriate the benefits conferred by a knowledge of the Name must, we are told, undertake the regular practice of Nām simran (remembrance of the divine Name). This practice of repeating the gurmanttra or initiation mantra (173) helps the devotee to internalize the divine names by which God is known.

But which names are the devotee to repeated? God is usually seen in the Sant tradition as being nameless and placeless. However, Bābā Sawan Singh like the Sikh Gurūs insists that certain names must be applied to Him if error and misunderstanding are to be avoided. (174) Although Bābā Sawan Singh draws upon names of God that originate primarily from the Nāth and Sikh traditions, he is anxious to ensure that no single name, with its inevitable bias should acquire dominant favour. To prevent this from happening he prefers to refer to the divine entity as Nām. God is simply the Name. (175)

From the Gurmat Siddhānt we learn that to comprehend the immanent and the all-sustaining nature of Nām is the supreme purpose of human life. It is in achieving this objective that the human spirit finds mystical union with God. (176) We also learn that the divine Name

dwells within every soul, but without the Satgurū's aid it cannot be discerned. (177) This is because the divine Name is an indwelling power and not a mere word. By means of a particular code of conduct and meditation, the Satgurū is said to help cleanse the devotee from the filth of self-centredness and egotism, major obstacles for those who sincerely wish to apprehend the divine Name. It is therefore felt that no one can grasp and experience the inner beauty of Nām without the indispensable guidance of the revered Satgurū. (178)

Bābā Sawan Singh goes on to indicate it is also by God's grace that one is able to come into contact with the holy Name and enjoy its benefits. He sees the necessity of divine grace as being tied in with the idea of a gracious and compassionate God. God, we have been told created the universe out of His own being, and dwelling immanent within it He observes the never ending drama which it presents. Man is created in order that he may apprehend the truth and worship God. Unfortunately he has chosen to squander this opportunity on worldly desires. Therefore God in his divine wisdom and grace, sends us the enlightened Satgurū who can initiate the gurmukh (179) into the secrets of the divine Name, thus enabling him to transcend the pains of existence. (180)

The Concept of the Divine Will

One of the prominent noticable features of Bābā Sawan Singh's "theology" is the significance attached to the idea of the divine will. Both the terms Bhāṇā and Hukām are employed. It is evident that both these terms are used in the strict Sikh sense of the term. Bābā Sawan Singh's primary source is Gurū Nānak.

The Concept of Bhāṇā

Bābā Sawan Singh translates Bhāṇā as God's sweet will. He stresses the supremacy of God's will and presents it as being eternally and essentially inherent in His nature. (181) Quoting from the Japjī he tells us that it is through the operation of this inscrutable omnipotent will that God manifests Himself in time and space in the phenomenal order of existence. The entire spatio-temporal order is therefore looked upon as the self-expression of God. (182) God's immanence is therefore seen here as being extremely significant for it links God with the universe and establishes the direction of His will..

For Bābā Sawan Singh a God with attributes expresses Himself in relation to the changing world. For the expression of divine attributes a changing universe is essential and is conceived as an integral part of His plan. Bābā Sawan Singh finds it impossible to think of the immanence of God in the absence of a changing world.

We now ask why the conception of Bhānā is considered necessary for Bābā Sawan Singh's theism. One could argue that this concept alone supplies the explanation for creation which is only intelligible in relation to the divine will. The divine will alone can give meaning and reality to the universe. Without it the harmonious character of the universe cannot be accounted for. The universe must be seen as a result of a purpose and purpose must be seen as centred in God's will to create.

Bābā Sawan Singh's theism is grounded in the conviction that the physical and moral order are expressions of God's divine character. The universe is a sacramental universe. The immanence of God on which so much emphasis is laid can be appreciated only through the recognition of the reality of divine will. Everything is governed by the will of God. This conception of the will of God presupposes that the universe has a purpose. From the viewpoint of the Gurmat Siddhānt this is not to be taken to mean that everything is predetermined. This would negate Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of a creative God and his belief that all movement in life is directed towards creative freedom. He does not subscribe to the view that Bhānā reduces all existence and actions to the rule of God's will. For him the idea of Bhānā is not one that spells rigid predeterminism. Man is seen as being active but God has ultimate supremacy over him. It is against this background that Bābā Sawan Singh teaches that man can only be liberated by merging his will into that of God. (183)

Bābā Sawan Singh also sees God as being gracious. Grace is perceived by him as the nexus between God and His creation. It is grace that lends to Bhānā an element of patriarchal consideration and affection. Grace is further defined as the divine response to the filial sentiments of living beings. So in the theology of this Rādhāsoāmī Satgurū we have a picture of a loving, caring God who readily responds to the salvational needs of the genuine seeker. (184) As Bābā Sawan Singh sees it, a God who is gracious has meaning in a world wherein His grace and will can operate. Grace implies that God's will is free and undetermined and in addition stresses the love and benevolence of God towards man and the universe.

As stated earlier, Bhānā is defined in relation to the need to obey God's will, perceived as an important means of achieving salvation. Bābā Sawan Singh uses the term Bhānā in the popular Puñjābī sense where it is taken to mean that which appeals to God, or is in accordance with His divine pleasure or sweet will. (185)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt submission to God's will is translated to mean submission to the will of the Satgurū who in turn is seen as the personification of God's will. (186) The centrality of the role of the Satgurū is clearly demonstrated here and Bābā Sawan Singh takes great pains to state this. He equates the divine will with the will of the Satguru by arguing that since the Satgurū is the inner voice of God his will must be permeated by that of the Lord. (187)

The Concept of Hukām

Conceived as one of the several expressions of the divine will, Hukām is described in the Gurmat Siddhānt as the divine law. (188) The relationship between Bhānā and Hukām in the Gurmat Siddhānt is a rather delicate one and is best explained in the following manner. Bhānā is what appeals to God, His divine pleasure or sweet will, and Hukām is that which results from it in the form of a cosmic principle. The divine order is therefore perceived as an expression of the divine will because it is that which resulted from God's act of creation. Hukām is therefore seen as the principle of creation upon which the principle of divine pleasure rests. (189) It is therefore evident that the terms Hukām and Bhānā are close to each other but are not synonymous as Grewal correctly observes. (190)

Generally speaking Hukām is an Arabic word expressing a concept which seems to reflect a distinctly Muslim doctrine. The actual word (hukm) must be accepted as a borrowing from the terminology of Islam. In the Gurmat Siddhānt this concept has classical Indian antecedents. (191) It is basic to Gurū Nānak's thought and is best translated to mean divine order. This order is defined as the divinely instituted and maintained principle governing the existence and movement of the universe. (192) In Bābā Sawan Singh's thinking the separation between ordainer and order is deemed incorrect for God installs Himself in the cosmic order, being immanent in His creation. (193)

Like Gurū Nānak, Bābā Sawan Singh sees the complete and comprehensive understanding of the nature and scope of Hukām as something beyond human comprehension. The following statements make this clear:

What is the Law ? We cannot describe it in any way. It can only be described by the inner self. (194)
Guru Arjan says that He who created this world knows the Divine Law. The Creator Himself correctly understands the Law. (195)

Hukām is conceived as part of the divine mystery and is as such an eternal abyss which no man can fathom. For Bābā Sawan Singh the realization of the reality of Hukām is to be accompanied by the realization that as a small part of the universe man belongs to that divine organizer who sustains and directs the entire universe.

Summary

We outlined the principal statements which we believe constitute the general theological framework of Bābā Sawan Singh. We commenced with a discussion of his "unknowability of God" thesis and discovered that in essence it represents a Santist reaffirmation of the Upaniṣadic notion of "a God beyond description". The idea of a single ultimate supreme creator was next presented. We noted that Bābā Sawan Singh was talking about the one God of Sikhism, conceived, however, within the context of the theory of causative causation, coloured by Kabīr-panthī beliefs and clothed in Nāth terminology.

We then uncovered the principal structures governing the idea of the selfhood of God as inextricably related to the finite universe. We observed here that Bābā Sawan Singh's theory of the God-universe relationship leaned heavily on Rāmānuja's Satkāryavāda doctrine. We also demonstrated that in the Gurmat Siddhānt ideas pertaining to the God-soul relationship were those of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Here however, there is evidence that Bābā Sawan Singh applied Shiv Dayāl Singh's variation of the theme.

In examining the catalogue of divine attributes developed by Bābā Sawan Singh we noted a tendency on his part to replicate the idea of God as the repository of all goodness which was to be found in the Sikh scriptures in general and the Japjī in particular.

Bābā Sawan Singh's theory of divine self-expression concentrates on the concepts of Śabd and Nām. Our analysis of these two concepts led us to the conclusion that the idea of the celestial sound current is an ancient Indian belief revived by the Nāth yogīs and integrated into Bābā Sawan Singh's mystical philosophy via the teachings embodied in the Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. In the case of Nām we noted that this typically Vaiṣṇavite idea, so prominent in the Sant doctrine, enters Bābā Sawan Singh's belief system via the Sikh scriptures. We noted that Nām is for Bābā Sawan Singh the expression of the whole nature of God.

Finally we examined the concept of the divine will, characterized by the concepts of Bhānā and Hukām. We observed that the idea of a God

who wills is central and that Bhāṇā and Hukām are interpreted as expressions of God's divine immanence. In presenting his ideas of a God of immanence, we saw Bābā Sawan Singh once again using the philosophy and terminology of the Sikh Gurūs.

In general it can be said that Bābā Sawan Singh's theological belief system rests on the monotheist's assumption that there is one supreme creator - God who creates, maintains and supervises the order of the universe of which He is an integral part.

NOTES

1. Bābā Sawan Singh tends to relate Sant Mat (Teachings of the Sants) to Gurbānī (i.e. the Ādi Granth). This is indicative of his heavy dependence on the Sikh scriptures. In the following statement the importance of the Ādi Granth is made absolutely clear. Referring to the contents of the Gurmat Siddhānt he writes:

The teachings are very clearly explained in the Granth Sahib which gives the spiritual teachings that have been given by all perfect Masters down through the centuries, and upon which most of the contents of the five books "Philosophy of the Masters" are based.

(Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 231)

See also Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. xciv-xcv and c11.

2. For convenience, and to avoid confusion, the universal term "God" will be employed throughout this study. Strictly speaking God in the Gurmat Siddhānt refers to the ultimate supreme creator known as Sat Puruṣ. The esoteric significance of the term and its cosmological connotations will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p 2.

4. In the following passage Kabīr vehemently proclaims that it is the analytical faculties of man that stand in the way of apprehending God:

As long as I had intellect
How could I gain strength?
Now the power of intellect
Cannot prevail over me
Says Kabir: the Lord
Has deprived me of my intellect.
Has transformed it
Into realization .

(Translated as Gauri, Ādi Granth, p. 399 by V.K. Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's Name [Beas, 1984], p. 288).

5. Gurū Nānak's "anti-intellectualism" is clearly mirrored in the Japjī, the liturgical prologue of the Ādi Granth which contains the epitome of the Sikh Gurūs' teachings. Gurū Nānak proclaims that:

Thinking avails not, howsoever hard one thinks,
Nor silence avails, howsoever one shrinks
Into oneself. Nor Hunger goes
With the (Pleasure) loads of the worlds.
Of a myriad cleverness, not one works.

How then to be True ? How rend the Veil of
 sham, untruth ?
 His Will (forsooth)
 Inborn in us, ingrained
 Thou follow.
 (Thus is Truth attained).

(Japji 1. Ādi Granth - p 1).

The Japji consists of a total a hundred and ninety-nine stanzas, each naming a cluster of divine features or qualities of God. The result is a lengthy catalogue of descriptive terms, some expressing negative concepts, but most expressed as positive terms. Among the terms used to describe the divine personality are "inexpressible", "nameless", and "beyond comprehension". For a brief introduction to the structure and content of the Japji, see McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism p. 94.

6. For example, in chapter 46 of the Sarvāṅgī of the Dadū-panthī Rajab we read about his bewilderment in trying to describe God:

The vision of God is like looking
 in a mirror,
 everything is seen in Him and yet is not seen in
 Him
 (46.12)

One in many yet distinct, many in One and yet
 different; I get bewildered trying to solve this
 problem. (46.14)

(Both quotations are from W. M. Callewaert, The Sarvāṅgī of the Dadūpanthī Rajab (Leuven, 1978), p. 289).

7. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 5.

8. The relevant passages in the Ādi Granth are, among others, Āsa M 3 Patti, (17-18) p. 437 and Sorath M 1 Chaupadas, (1) p. 597. All the passages from the Ādi Granth quoted from the Gurmat Siddhant are done so verbatim. These translations do not necessarily correspond with those found in standard translations of the Ādi Granth. Unless otherwise stated, all other quotations from the Ādi Granth cited in this study are taken from G. Singh (trns), Sri Guru Granth Sahib Vol I-IV (Chandigarh, 1978).

9. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p 6. for Bābā Sawan Singh's reference to the celebrated "neti neti" phrase of the Bṛhādaranyaka Upaniṣad (4.2.4, 4.4.22, 4.5. 15 and 3.9.26). For further information on this phrase see p. Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upanishads (New York, 1966) pp. 126, 147.

10. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 5-6. For a general theological approach to the so - called "beyond comprehension" conception of God, see W.

D. Hudson, "The Concept of Divine Transcendence", in Religious Studies 15 (1979), pp. 197-210.

11. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV p. 2.

12. One cannot help but be reminded of the Chan adage which proclaims that "wordiness and intellection - the more with them the further astray we go". This Taoist saying seems to reflect the spirit of Bābā Sawan Singh's thoughts on the matter. See R.H. Jones, "A philosophical analysis of mystical experience", in Philosophy East and West 29 (1979), p. 272.

13. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV p. 3.

14. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 5. Bābā Sawan Singh reaffirms here the Sant conception of the deity which is essentially spiritual. The Sants apprehend God in their hearts as the all pervading reality.

15. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p xviii. Ninian Smart's article "Our Experience of the Ultimate" in Religious Studies 20 (1984), pp. 19-26 highlights the mystic's approach to intuition. It provides us with some idea of what Bābā Sawan Singh is trying to say when he talks of God being experienced "with/in the human heart".

16. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV p. 2.

17. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 18. It would appear that Bābā Sawan Singh had Kabīr in mind with this statement. An examination of the Kabir Granthavalī (pp. 96, 121) - a work attributed by some to Kabīr - demonstrates what Kabīr thinks and Bābā Sawan Singh is saying.

From Onkar the word came into
being;
Through deception it continues to be
Play the unstruck tune of Bagpipe,
Make the highest firmament your home
And stay there happy and carefree .

Translated by Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's
Name, p. 197).

18. The verse in question reads as follows:

The self born is One;
There was motion in Him
And it produced Onkar.

(Quoted as Var 22 Pauri 14 in Gurnat Siddhant,
Vol. IV p 18).

19. McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism p. 86.

20. See P. Singh (ed.), Sikh Concept of the Divine (Patiala, 1985), pp. 32-56 for more on this subject.

Contrary to popular opinion the term Onkār is not native to Gurū Nānak, a fact often overlooked by many scholars of Sikhism. The origin of the term is probably to be found in its Nāth usage. In Gorakh Bodh (14.102) it is used exactly in the same sense as in the Adi Granth (see for example, Rānkali M 1 Dakhani Onkār (1), p. 930). See M. Singh, Gorakhnath and Medieval Hindu Mysticism (Lahore, 1937), p. 63 for notes on the Nāth usage of the term Onkār by Gorakhnāth.

21. Names used for the one Godhead in the Sikh tradition include Wāhiguru, Akāl Purakh and Satinām.

22. See T. Singh, "Unity of God - The Sikh Point of View", in Studies in Islam 16 (1979), pp. 94-100 for a definition of the unity aspect of God, as portrayed in the Sikh scriptures.

23. These names shall be receive mention in a later section of this chapter..

24. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 7.

25. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 20, 27-29.

26. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 30 and 32.

27. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 14.

28. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 20.

29. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 19, 20.

30. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 18, 26, 28.

31. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 5.

32. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 5.

33. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 7.

34. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 16-17.

35. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 7.

36. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 5. Verses from the Adi Granth which might offer an indication of Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of God as creator and destroyer include, Vadhans M 1 (1) p. 581, Rānkali M 1 Dakhani Onkār (31,41), pp. 934, 935 and Dhanasri M 1, (1), p. 688.

37. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 50. The phrase "caring God" is a fitting description of Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of a God who cares. This is in direct contrast to the idea of a distant, uncaring God who is conceived

as a distant figure unconcerned with the created world and the destiny of His creatures therein. For a discussion of the caring God see J.J. Lipner, "The Christian and Vedantic theories of originative causality: A study in transcendental immanence", in Philosophy East and West 28 (1978), p. 56.

38. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 48.

39. In Sanskrit the term puruṣa signifies man, or "the living principle in men and other beings", and finally "the supreme Spirit". In the Vedas it is another name of Dakṣa, the mythological expression of the male principle or creative force. To him is dedicated the famous Puruṣasukta, Rg Veda x 90 which recurs, with variations, in the Atharvaveda (xix.6), the Vajasaneyi Samhitā (xxx1) and the Taittiriya Aranyaka (iii.12)

In the Rg Veda x 81.82 Puruṣa is invoked under the name Viskarman, "All-creator", who in later mythology became the architect of Gods, Prajapati. The Brahmanas contain many legends about Prajapati creating the world. They usually commence with a statement like the following;

In the beginning was Prajapati, nothing but Prajapati; he desired, 'May I become many'; he performed austerities, and thereby created these worlds.

(Quoted as Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa xi. 1.1, By H. Jacobi, "Cosmogony and Cosmology" [Indian], in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol IV [Edinburgh, 1935], p. 156).

40. See S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II [30], p. 79.

41. See A. Shah (trns.), The Bīlak of Kabīr (Hamimpur, 1977), pp. 40-43. Refer also to P.D. Barthwal, Traditions of Indian Mysticism based upon Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 29-30.

42. See S.S. Das (ed.), Kabīr vāncāvalī (Benares, 1925), p. 2.

43. See Tivari, Kabīr Granthāvalī, pp. 162, 219.

44. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 32.

45. Information on the Sukh Nidhān (Treasure of Happiness) is indeed rare. It is to Rev. F.E. Keay that we owe a great deal for having pioneered research into Kabīr-panthī literature. See Kabīr And His Followers (Calcutta, 1931), p. 113 for an account of the Sukh Nidhān. See also Barthwal, Traditions of Indian Mysticism based on Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry, p. 281.

46. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 14, 30-34

47. Barthwal has this to say about the so-called Nirānjana school

The Niranjana School is a development of the Nātha School. In it Yoga has come under the full Vedāntic influence. It is in a way midway between the Nātha School and the Nirguṇa School, and has with some of the earlier Nirguṇis like Kabīr and Dādū practically very little difference in the realm of philosophy and can well be placed in the same category as Rāmāṇanda. The difference becomes more pronounced when followers of Kabīr and others like Dharamdāsīs and the Rādhāswamists begin to talk of Niranjana, as the Lord of death or as Kāla puruṣa .

(Traditions of Indian Mysticism based on Nirguṇa School of Hindi Poetry, p. x-xi) .

Nirāṇjan also occupies an important position in the Siddha Siddhānta Paddhanti and Amrita Kunda, both well known Nath texts. See K. Mallik, Siddha- Siddhānta- Paddhanti And Other Works of The Nath Yogis (Poona, 1954). The Sūfī Shaikh 'Abdul- Quddus Gangohi calls Nirāṇjan "Khuda" and identifies him with the creation of the different worlds. See A.A.S. Rivzi, A History of Sufism in India Vol 1 (New Delhi, 1975), p. 337.

Nirāṇjan (creator of the lower worlds) also appears in Bhavatārān (The Crossing of the Ocean of Existence) - a Kabīr-panthī poem of over four hundred stanzas depicting a conversation between Kabīr and Dharam Dās, head of the Chattisgarh Kabīr-panthīs. See Keay, Kabir And His Followers. p. 125.

48. M. Singh, Gorakhnath And Medieval Hindu Mysticism. p. 94.

49. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 32.

50. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 31. Though Bābā Sawan Singh does mention the Sikh practice of defining Nirankār as "the wholly detached formless One", he does not employ the adjectives "atit" and "alipt", used in the Sikh scriptures to denote Nirankār's detachedness.

51. See Sorath M 1, Ādi Granth. p. 596.

52. See Rag Majh, Ashtapadis, M 3 (1-3) Ādi Granth. p. 115.

53. See Japjī Pauris 28, 29, 30 and 31, Ādi Granth. pp. 6 and 7.

54. See Rāmkalī M 1, Dakhani Onkār, Dhadha (20) Ādi Granth p. 932.

55. Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 23.

56. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 23.

57. N.K. Jain, Sikh Religion and Philosophy (New York, 1979), p. 27.

58. This idea underlies the entire philosophy of Bābā Sawan Singh. Like all Sants he pleads for the achievement of a God-centred life. In the Sikh scriptures which so often provide him with inspiration we see this message repeatedly emphasized. See Rāg Suhi M 5 (1-4) Adi Granth, p. 750, Rāmkali M 1 Ashtapadis, (6-9) Adi Granth, p. 905 and Maru M 3, Ashtapadi, (4-10) Adi Granth, p. 1016.

59. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 5 -10.

60. See for example, Chāndogya Upanisad 6.2.1 and 6.8.7.

61. See for example, Viṣṇu Purāṇa VI.5, p. 466.

62. This idea is expressed for example in the 7th, section of the Bṛ. hādāraṇyaka Upanisad (111 7.15) which reads:

He who dwells in all beings, yet is within
all beings, whom no beings know,
whose body is all beings, who
controls all beings from within,
he is your self, the inner controller, the
immortal.

(Quoted from S. Radhakrishnan,
The Principal Upanisads
(London, 1953), p. 228).

See also Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 34-35.

63. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 21.

64. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 5, 45.

65. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 5, 7, 21, 27.

66. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p 35. Gupta's elucidation of the cause-effect relationship in Rāmānuja's philosophy is also applicable to Bābā Sawan Singh. Of the relationship Gupta writes:

One causal substance can assume different states and features at different times, under different conditions. Since the potentialities of all these states are inherent in the substance, the effects are called "existent" (sat) even before they are actually produced in the effect forms.

(S. Gupta, A Critical Study of the Philosophy of Rāmānuja (Varanasi, 1968), p. 63).

67. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 34-48.

68. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. xvii. See also pp. 10-11 of the same volume.

69. For studies of Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrine see C. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 335-372, J.B. Carmen, The Theology of Rāmānuja. An Essay in Interreligious Understanding (New Haven and London, 1974) and K.D. Bhavadwaj, The Philosophy of Rāmānuja (New Delhi, 1958).

70. The question of Kabīr's position vis-a-vis Rāmānuja's part-of-the-whole theory is a complex, if not highly controversial one and is beyond the scope of this study. We quote here however, a verse from the Kabīr Granthavali which, in our view epitomizes Kabīr's reading of the God-soul relationship:

The Lord and the swan
Are in essence the same;
The physical covering
Makes a swan differ
From other swans.

From the same clay
The potter produces
A multiplicity,
In many colors,
In many forms.

Milk ten cows
Of five different colors
And their milk
Will be the same

Says Kabir: O man,
Set aside thy delusion;
Know that the One,
The Lord of all,
Fills every vessel.

The physical covering
Makes a swan differ
From other swans;
But the Lord and the swan
Are in essence the same. "

(Translated as Kabir Granthavali, p. 82 : 53, by Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 487).

71. We agree with Barthwal's interpretation that Shiv Dayal Singh represents a particular variation of the doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita. We quote below, for purposes of illustration, a passage from the Sar Bachan Radhasoami (Poetry) which clearly indicates Shiv Dayal Singh's view of the God-soul relationship.

The devotee and the Lord are one. Know ye
the true Guru to be the Love-form also,

75. Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV pp 16-17. See also pp 22-25. The portrayal of God's sovereignty in the Japji which surely would have inspired Bābā Sawan Singh appear in lines 2, 5, 6, 7-9, 16-19 and 24-26.

Having said this however, we wish to point out that the listing and treatment of God's immanent and transcendental attributes, in the Gurmat Siddhant, replicates, in parts, that of the Adi Granth but is in no way as exhaustive. Bābā Sawan Singh's format is sketchy, haphazard and unsatisfactory to say the least. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV pp. 22-25. For a listing of the divine attributes in the Adi Granth see T. Singh, "Unity of God - The Sikh Point of View", pp 94-100.

76. Our understanding of Śāṅkara's theory of consciousness is based on that of Sharma in A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, pp. 252-253.

77. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 9-10.

78. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 55, 57.

79. Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 57.

80. The passage from the Adi Granth used in the Gurmat Siddhant to illustrate the universality of God as truth is the following:

True is the Creator,
True is the Cause,
True is the Lord,
True is the Master's support
Utter the Truth,
For Truth brings enlightenment.

(Quoted as M 5 Sri Rag 52-8 in Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 55).

81. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 56. The three worlds referred to here are the physical, astral and causal planes.

82. This a reference to the supra-causal cosmic region known in Rādhāsoamī parlance as Bhanwar Guphā. We shall return to this name when discussing Rādhāsoamī cosmology in the next chapter.

83. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 7.

84. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV pp. 14, 16-17.

85. See note 9 of this chapter.

86. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 16, 22-23 and 40.

87. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 5, 7 and 21.

88. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 22.

89. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 40 .
90. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 34 . See also pp. 52 and 81 of the same volume. Questions pertaining to the divine will shall receive attention in the section on the concepts of Bhānā and Hukam.
91. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV pp. 5, 7, 17, 37, 38, 40, 42 and 49.
92. C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain (London, 1940), p. 23.
93. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 40.
94. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 78.
95. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. xviii. This idea of the "inner reality of God within the human heart" is one that also finds expression in the Ādi Granth from which Bābā Sawan Singh quotes the following passage:
- Do not consider the True One to
be afar off;
He is within us.
Wherever I look I find Him.
How can I evaluate Him ?
- (Quoted as M 1 Aa pp. 421-6 in Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV p. 40).
96. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 52.
97. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 51, 52, 75 and 82.
98. Bābā Sawan Singh's list of divine attributes includes Ekankar (One), Sat Nām (True Name), Nirbhāi (Fearless), Nirvair (Without enmity), Akāl (Timeless Being), Ajuni (Unborn), Sabham (Self-existent) and Gurū Parādi (Grace of Master). This list somewhat similar to the one found in the Mūlmantra (Ādi Granth p. 1).
99. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. xlv. See also pp. 30 and 43 of the same volume.
- We are reminded here of the minimum working hypothesis of Vedānta philosophy which stipulates that man's real nature is divine. It also states that his purpose on earth is to realize that divine nature. For a general interpretation of the message of Vedānta, see C. Isherwood and M. Rodd (eds.), Vedānta for the Western World (New York, 1945).
100. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 10.
101. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 50.
102. The three cardinal precepts of the Rādhasoāmī faith are Śabd, Satgurū and Satsang. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. lxxxvi-lxxxviii.

Though these three precepts are as a rule seen to be standing on equal footing, some sectarian writers tend to elevate Sabd to a position of predominance. One such example is Julian Johnson, one of Bābā Sawan Singh's earliest Western initiates. He writes:

The Audible Life Stream is the cardinal, central fact in the science of the Masters. It is the key stone of the arch. It is the cornerstone of the structure. It is the structure itself. And it is the Path of the Masters.

(The Path of the Masters, p. 368).

103. Sabd is discussed under the heading "The Sound Current". See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 107-172.

104. Nām (the divine Name) is discussed in Vol. IV on pp. 173-221.

105. Gurū Nānak's position on Sabd is given expression in the following verses of the Adi Granth, Rāmkali M 1, Siddha Goshti, (25-39) pp. 940-942. For Dādū's definition see 1 Sabd 10 of the Dadu Dayāl ki Bānī as quoted by Upadhyaya in Dadu the Compassionate Mystic p. 118.

106. Amongst the names used to describe Sabd are "the celestial melody", "divine sound", "inner melody" and "divine music". See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 108, 116 and 117 and 126.

107. Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 46

108. The following passage from the Sar Bachan Rādhāsoamī (Poetry) is typical of Shiv Dayāl Singh's understanding of the term:

Shabd hath created all three worlds (i.e. the whole universe); from Shabd hath spread all Phenomena (Maya). Shabd hath created the "And" (Astral Plane) and the Brahmand (Causal Plane); "Shabd" hath made the seven Island-Realms ("Dip" or "Dweep") and nine sections (of the universe); "Shabd" sustaineth the three "Gunas" (Qualities) and all people; "Shabd" supporteth the earth and sky. "Shabd" hath made man and Brahm; "Shabd" hath brought into existence the sun and the moon.

(Translated as Bachan 1 in Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 46)

109. Shiv Dayāl Singh frequently speaks of Sabd as the divine melody, transcendent melody, and the all pervading form of God. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 45. Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the same

terms could lead one to speculate about him using the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī as a source of reference.

110. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 108. See also p. xcix of the same volume.

111. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 107.)

The resemblance of this passage to another in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Poetry) is striking. Bachan I Shabd 3 reads:

O! know thou, "Shabd" as the beginning of all creation; and the end of all too thou know as "Shabd". The three worlds and the Fourth Realm (Dimension), all these things hath "Shabd" created.

(Translated by Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 47).

Shiv Dayāl Singh in turn seems to have been inspired by the Kabīr kī Sabdāvalī (p. 33:69) which runs as follows:

Apply yourself, O friend,
To the practice of Shabd -
The Shabd from even which
The creator came into being;
Imprint that Shabd
In your heart, O friend.

(Translated by Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 225).

112. The relationship between celestial sound and light to Śabd has many important cosmological and esoteric connotations, the detailed treatment of which shall be reserved for the chapters dealing with cosmology and Surat Sabd Yoga. Bābā Sawan Singh's explanation appears on pp. 130-133 of Vol. IV of the Gurmat Siddhānt.

113. The Rādhāsoāmī cosmic hierarchy will be discussed in the next chapter.

114. Bābā Sawan Singh has dedicated an entire chapter in the Gurmat Siddhānt (Vol. IV pp. 236-250) to amrit, a concept which for all practical purposes is used as a synonym for Śabd and as such does not merit separate treatment.

Strictly speaking the term amrit (nectar) means sanctified water. In the history of Sikhism plays an important role in the inauguration ceremony of the Khālsā movement founded by Gurū Gobind Singh. For details see McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, p. 3. Some scholars believe that the Sants borrowed the term from the Tāntric Buddhists and Vajrayāna Siddhas but attached to

it a different meaning, that of the expression of God or God Himself. See Callewaert, The Sarvāṅgī of the Dadūpanthī Rājab, p. 330.

Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the term is very much in keeping with this and his constant reference to the Sikh scriptures points to a specifically Sikh understanding of the term. He uses it as a symbolic expression of the intimate presence of God in creation.

115. Chapter VI of volume IV of the Gurmat Siddhānt is dedicated to the concept of Hari Ras, another synonym for Sabd, a term that is probably of Kabīrian origin. Kabīr takes it to mean the elixir of Hari, whilst at the same time alluding to the mahārāsa rasāyana of Tāntric yoga which is said to confer immortality. Bābā Sawan Singh adheres to its Sikh usage and dubs it divine ambrosia. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 222.

116. Vāk indicates both voice and the spoken word and has essentially the same meaning as sabda. See P. Basu, A Study of the Hindu Concept of Vāk: The Power of the Word in an Oral Society (Ph.D dissertation University of Princeton, 1978), p. 32. Refer also to J. Woodroffe, The Garland of Letters: Studies in the Mantra-Sāstra (Madras, 1964).

117. Basu, A Study of the Hindu Concept of Vāk. The Power of the Word in an Oral Society, p. 39.

118. See Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 11.8.8.4,5.

119. See Maitrī Upaniṣad 11 VI 22.

120. See Manu 1.21-25.

121. In Rg Veda X 125. 7-8 vāk is seen as the supporting principle of the universe.

122. We shall return to this subject in detail in the next chapter.

123. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 109.

124. See S.D. Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 191-255 for information regarding the Nāth concept of sabda.

125. Bābā Sawan Singh's version of the Rādhāsoāmī theory of cosmic descent will be elucidated in the next chapter. For a general preview of the general Rādhāsoāmī cosmology, see Babb, Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition, pp. 34-61. 126. The idea of "the Voice of God resounding in the world" (Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 123) is probably borrowed from the Kabīr-panthī idea of the cosmic sound reverberating in the universe, (Sabdāvalī Part. 2 Sorath 15, p. 99). However, Bābā Sawan Singh's principal source of reference apart from the Kabīrpanth and Shiv Dayāl Singh remains the Sikh Gurūs. In all he refers to the Sikh scriptures over seventy times in chapter IV of the volume of the Gurmat Siddhānt in question.

127. See for example Valayapidiya 1:14, 1:22.

128. A useful introduction to the yoga of the word is H. Coward, "The Yoga of the Word (Sabdapūrvayoga)", in The Adya Library Bulletin 49 (1985), pp. 1-13.

129. Śabd Yoga or Surat Śabd Yoga is the yogic discipline of the Rādhāsoamī faith. The name is derived from the Nāth-panthi suratī-sabda yoga. Brief notes on suratī-sabda yoga appear in Barthwal, Traditions of Indian Mysticism based on Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry, pp. 98, 130, 142 and 169.

130. A more literal translation is the one offered by Puri. He defines Surat Śabd Yoga as "the practice of conscious union of the soul with the Divine and the all pervading melody of the Supreme Being". (Rādhāsoamī Teachings, p. 8). Lane simply calls it "the union of consciousness/attention with the divine inner sound". Lane, The Death of Kirpal Singh. The Politics of Guru Successorship, p. 1.

131. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 127-128.

132. The omnipotent agency of Sabd receives repeated attention in the Gurmat Siddhant. See Vol. IV, pp. 111, 121, 123, 126 and 137.

133. The practice of "turning inwards" (ulti chala in Nāth terminology) has its roots in Nāth yoga and was probably introduced into the Sant yoga sādhanā by Kabīr. This regressive process which consists in the reversal of all psychological currents and is essential to the meditational practice of the Rādhāsoamīs will be explored fully in a later chapter.

134. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 132. Light and sound as expressions of Sabd are to be found in the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga and are related to surat (the hearing faculty) and nirat (the seeing faculty). Both these terms are used by the Nāths.

Bābā Sawan Singh, however, prefers to quote the Adi Granth for references to sound and light:

When the mind was attuned to the Shabd;
It became detached and dispassionate,
There appeared Light within and from it emanated
The Heavenly Sound which made me the devotee of
the True Lord.

(Quoted as M 1 Sorath 634-12 in
Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p 130).

135. The repeated references to the inwardness of Śabd (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 4, 129, 141) is expressive of the Sant notion of the interior path of spirituality. Like his Sant predecessors Bābā Sawan Singh calls for an uncompromising rejection of external forms of religious expression (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. xxii-xxxii), in favour of an interior transformation of the self. See Juergensmeyer,

"The Radhasoami Revival of the Sant Tradition", p. 399 for a brief explanation of "Sant internalism".

136. The third eye is referred to in Rādhāsōmī literature as *tīrā* *tīl* and *daswan dīr* (the tenth aperture) and is considered to be the seat of the soul, the aperture of access to the higher regions. A detailed discussion of the use of this Tantric term in the Rādhāsōmī vocabulary follows in the chapter on Surat Sabd Yoga. Suffice to say at this juncture that Bābā Sawan Singh uses the term tenth door as it appears in its Nath setting. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 128.

137. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV pp. 154-158.

138. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 158-165.

139. See Sabdāvalī Pt. 1, Arill 8, p 10, also Kundi 20, p 39. Bābā Sawan Singh however, prefers the term "unending sound" (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 154), which he calls "a recital of God's Name" (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 156).

140. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 155. The passages referred to here are given as M 1 Ram Kali 897-7, M 4 Jetsari 698-3, M 5 Bhairon 1137-10 and M 5 Vadhas 578-14.

141. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 129. See also pp. lxix, lxxvi of the same volume.

142. Bābā Sawan Singh explains that there are five Sabds for the five primary realms of creation, three up to Trikutī, the causal plane, two between Trikutī and Sach Khand and one in Sach Khand, (see Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 160). However, all these five Sabds are said to merge into one when the soul unites with God. Bābā Sawan Singh bases this idea on a verse from Bhāī Gurdas quoted as Bhāī Gurdas: Var 6 Pauri 10 (see Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 162). For other details see pp. 158-163 of the volume of the Gurmat Siddhant mentioned here.

143. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 135 .

144. Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV. pp. 142-143. The discussion here is repeatedly reinforced with quotations from the Adi Granth.

145. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 147-154, 234-235 and 250-252.

146. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 148, 150.

147. The "five evils" referred here to are lust, avarice, anger, ego and attachment. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. 152.

148. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 138. Bābā Sawan Singh's interpretation of the status of the Satgurū is the subject of discussion of a separate chapter.

149. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 139.

150. The Satgurū is described by Bābā Sawan Singh in typically Sant fashion. He writes: "The Master is Himself the Shabd or the Word made flesh" (Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 139).
151. The references here are given as M Sarang var 1249-8 and M Basant 1188-15. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 139.
152. See for example Rāmkālī M 1 Chaupadas (1-4) Ādi Granth p. 879.
153. See note 152 as above.
154. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 141.
155. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 140.
156. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 149.
157. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 149. See also page 147 of the same volume.
158. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV 142. Bābā Sawan Singh seeks reinforcement for his beliefs by referring to the following passage in the Ādi Granth:
- The self-centred know not the Name.
Without the Name they lose honour.
They are torn by duality,
And love not the taste of the Word.
- (Quoted as M 3 Sri Rag 28-9 in the
Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p 142).
159. See Vaudeville, Kabir Vol 1, p. 141.
160. See W. Douglas, (trns.), The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma (Rāmacaritamānasa) (London, 1971), pp. 14-18
161. Though the concepts Śabd and Nām are considered in separate chapters (chapters IV and V of Vol IV), their contents have very much in common with each other from the viewpoint of general structure and content.
162. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV pp. 184-185. The passage cited is quoted as M 5 Gaurī 265-10.
163. The theme of Gurū Arjan's Sukhmani is the grandeur of the divine Name. It extols the beauty of the Name by repeatedly declaring its crucial importance in man's quest for spiritual freedom. The title of the work has variously been translated as "The Pearl of Peace" or "Peace of Mind". See McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism -pp. 110-114.
164. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 173.

165. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 175-176.

166. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 173.

167. The distinction that Kabīr makes is one between the exterior (voiced) aspect and interior (unvoiced) aspect of Nām. For him it is only the first aspect that can lead the soul to the mystical experience termed paraca. See Kabīr Granthāvalī p. 120: 218.

168. In the following verse Shiv Dayāl Singh defines the "expressible Name" and the "inexpressible Name":

The distinction twixt Baranatmak and Dhuniatmak
have I stated; thou mayest call them "Vach"
(Name in words), and "Laksh" (the thing
itself). "Vach" know thou as Baranatmak;
and the Melody of Shabd know thou as "Laksh".

(Translated as Bachan 10 Shabd 1 by Puri,
Radhasoami Teachings, p. 31).

See also S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (260), p. 160.

Of interest here also is the fact that although no explicit attempt is made to define Dhuniatmak Nām, Bābā Sawan Singh does repeatedly use the word "unutterable Name", which comes close to Gurū Nānak's Akath Katha (Unutterable Utterance)

169. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 198-201.

170. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 205.

171. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 218.

172. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 197-198.

173. We shall be detailing the relationship of Nām simran to the Rādhāsoāmī gurmantra in the chapter on Surat Sabd Yoga.

174. See McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, pp. 39-40 for an explanation of Gurū Nānak's position regarding the application of names to the Divine.

175. It is interesting to note that unlike the proponents of the Agra line, Bābā Sawan Singh does not mention the word "Rādhāsoāmī Naam" anywhere. Instead he sticks to the word "Naam" in describing the nameless essence beyond the pantheon of Gods. Being a Satgurū of the Beas line the name "Rādhāsoāmī" is played down as just another name or to quote Puri, "just words of some language". (Radhasoami Teachings, p. 34).

176 See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 195, 198, 214 and 217.

177. The Satgurū is referred to as "the giver of the Name". (Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 208).
178. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 207-208.
179. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 209.
180. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 211.
181. Once again the Ādi Granth is referred to when this point is made. The verse quoted is given as M 5 Majh 98-16, M 5 Gauri 154-1 and M 1 Asa 356 -11. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 76.
182. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 75.
183. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 83-84.
184. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 91-93.
185. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 72.
186. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 86-87.
187. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 86.
188. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 93.
189. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 94.
190. See J. S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History (Chandigarh, 1979), p. 134.
191. Thoughts relating to the idea of Hukām already appear in the form of the Vedic terms rta and vrat, the former standing for cosmic order and the latter for the functioning principle of the universe. See W. Singh, "Hukam: An Interpretation", in The Sikh Courier 28 (1988), p. 7.
192. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 93, 102.
193. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 93, 96.
194. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 95.
195. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 103.

CHAPTER III

COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

In the Gurmat Siddhānt Bābā Sawan Singh does not commit himself to systematically constructing a cosmological system of his own. Instead what he presents are scattered references to various aspects of the Rādhāsoāmī cosmological scheme. (1) These, when taken together serve to provide the reader with some idea of the backdrop of ideas that influences his cosmological thinking. We are here dealing with a belief system founded on Kabīr-panthī writings and on the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī.

There is a great deal of literature belonging to the Kabīrpanth. Until recent years most of it existed only as manuscripts and were therefore not accessible. Now some of it has been printed, though there are a considerable number of works that will remain unknown to the researcher. (2) The texts that are of interest to us here are the Bīlak (3) and the Anurāg Sāgar. (4)

Kabīr scholars agree that there is no evidence to suggest that Kabīr ever composed a single line or even wrote a single verse - though a large number of works have been attributed to him by the Kabīr-panthīs. (5) It must be stated, however, that Kabīr-panthīs do not claim that Kabīr wrote down the verses himself. They believe that

Kabīr composed them orally and that they were subsequently written down by his immediate disciples especially Bhago Dās and Dharam Dās. (6) It is often the practice of Kabīr-panthīs to publish their works as Kabīr Kṛit (i.e. written by Kabīr). (7) The Bīlak in its various forms (8) is considered the most sacred book of the Kabīr-panthīs and seen by some as "the most authoritative record of the teachings of Kabīr". (9) The Bīlak, Vaudeville (10) informs us, comes down to us in two forms, a longer and a shorter one. She believes, however, that neither of them can be attributed to Kabīr since they contain references to an elaborate cosmology, something usually associated with Kabīr-panthī writings. (11) The Anurāg Sāgar (12) is a cosmological work of the Chhatigarh branch of the Kabīrpanth and an important text for later esoteric Santism. It is one of the forty works mistakenly attributed to Kabīr and collected together in the eleven volumed Kabīr Sāgar. (13) This work purports to be a dialogue between Kabīr and Dharam Dās, one of Kabīr's best known disciples, said to have founded the Chhatigarh branch of the Kabīrpanth, some time in the late sixteenth century. (14)

Bābā Sawan Singh is reported to have held this text in high regard, considering it to be the most important book on the teachings of Sant Mat. (15) Ram has this to report:

Hazur one day told Seth Vasdev that he should read Kabir Sahib's Anurag Sagar (The Ocean of Intense Love). Hazur said that without studying it, one cannot fully understand the teachings of Sant Mat. (16)

It is these texts (17) that deliver the content of Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology, modified, nevertheless, in the form of sectarian dogma. (18) It is to these texts and the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī of Shiv Dayāl Singh that one must turn if any meaningful understanding of Bābā Sawan Singh's cosmological beliefs is to be achieved.

We commence the analysis by determining what is said in the Gurmat Siddhānt about the pre-creation state. Central to this discussion is an understanding of what Bābā Sawan Singh means by a state of God being "all in Himself". We will also examine the conviction that the mystery of the universe is beyond human comprehension.

In presenting Bābā Sawan Singh's version of the act of creation we analyze his notion of God's will to create the universe. We are dealing here with a creation theory based on the idea of divine self-manifestation.

Our final task involves a study of Bābā Sawan Singh's cosmography. We highlight here his description of the different cosmic regions and their governing deities and the pivotal role of Sat and Kal Purus.

The Pre - Creation State

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the pre-creation state is described as follows:

When He was hidden in Himself He
was neither one nor two. He had
no forms or attributes. Exactly

what he was cannot be described.
In the unmanifested state He was
inconceivable, unknowable and nameless.
He was neither the Doer nor the nature,
nor the Creator. There was neither
creator, nor even the creation. (19)

The language and style of this account is reminiscent of that of
the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoamī (Poetry). Bachan 23 Shabd 1 of the text
reads:

How far can I say ? No one was there ; the
creation of the four realms had not taken
place. What there was do I tell thee now:
Wondrous Wonder twas all in Himself, Wonder,
Wonder, Wonder. Wonder then took on a form.
In Himself doth He ever remain, that state
doth He ever retain. His Being doth no one
know; He Himself doth tell us Himself He was
Himself, and no other was there.

Pre-creation stories such as these already exist in the Rg Veda,
(21) Upanisads, (22) Srī Bhāṣya, (23) Gorakṣa-vijaya (24) Ādi
Granth, (25) Anurāg Sāgar (26) and the Bijak. (27) Whatever the
variations in style, all these pre-creation myths have a number of
clearly discernable common features. These include the idea of pre-
creational darkness, chaos or non-being. These ideas are usually
accompanied by portrayals of the God as being "in Himself" - a state
often described as an indescribable mystery. These ideas figure
prominently in the writings of Bābā Sawan Singh and his predecessor
Shiv Dayāl Singh.

The idea of "God being in Himself" is found in the Sār Bachan
Rādhāsoamī (Poetry). Shiv Dayāl Singh has this to say:

Saints have described it as the realm
of "All in Himself", the region of the

Wondrously Wonderful. He Himself came
to be known as "Anam" or "Akeh" for no
form of feature or color hath He. (28)

Bābā Sawan Singh expresses the same idea in the Gurnat Siddhant when
he writes:

He was hidden in Himself. He was neither
one nor two, He had no form nor attributes.
Exactly what He was cannot be described.
In the unmanifested state He was inconceivable,
unknowable and nameless. (29)

What we have here is essentially a description of what might be termed
the highest state of existence or level of consciousness. It is that
state of God being alone as the "original Cause", (30) before
creation in any form had taken place. In the beginning, we are told,
there was nothing but God "in Himself". He was pure existence. The
term "pure existence" is used here to denote a state of perfect divine
existence. It refers to a transcendental state of non-dual reality
where nothing exists with or beside God Himself. It is not a state of
nothingness. All is in God and God is in all.

The central theme here is of an everpresent, eternal, absolute Being
existing as love and grace and bliss, before the creation of space
and time. Bābā Sawan Singh elaborates further:

Prior to the creation of this world,
God was a vast ocean - like All -
Consciousness. He was all love, all
bliss and self-sufficient. God was
everything in Himself and was in a
state of blissful quiescence, and His
basic form was Love. (31)

Bābā Sawan Singh is not willing to be drawn into a discussion about the when and why of creation. Instead he concentrates on the state of the universe before creation. He exhorts the reader to refrain from intellectualizing about the mystery of creation, (32) which to him is essentially a spiritual experience. (33) His emphasis on the mystery of creation is typical of the Sant attitude towards the problem of creation. What emerges out of Bābā Sawan Singh's statement is the belief that the question of creation is a divine mystery best understood only by the creator Himself. He says that:

The reply of perfect Saints to questions concerning whence this universe originated, and when and how, is that we should approach the Creator Himself for the answer. (34)

This is a position that has also been adopted by the Sikh Gurūs in the Adi Granth. Rāmkali M I (1-2), for example reads:

The Lord Creates all His Wonders and Knows
alone their Mystery and Quintessence.
Rare is the one who reflects on this Wisdom,
And so is Emancipated and Attains the highest
Bliss.

In the night is the day Merged: the day envelopes
the night; heat and cold too (are the facets of
the same sun) so does God's Light inform us all.
But save for the Guru, no one knows His State and
Extent; nay no one does. (35)

The Act of Creation

Although we are not told why God chose to create the universe, we are told how it came into being. In the Gurmat Siddhant it is indicated that the universe came into being as a result of a conscious resolve

on the part of the creator to create the world. Central to the discussion here is the term "mauj", loosely translated by Bābā Sawan Singh to mean "wave", which in Rādhāsoāmī parlance means "supreme will" or "purposive play". (36) The idea underlying the concept of mauj is similar to that which explains the concept of līlā in the Brahmasūtra (37) or Vedānta. (38) Both these terms convey the idea of creation as an involuntary or spontaneous act of love, an overflowing of the plenitude of the creator. The following statements from the Gurnat Siddhānt make this clear:

Man has been created in the image of God,
and God is Love.

God is Love, and Love was in the beginning.
The entire creation is the result of love. (39)

Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the term "mauj" to mean a wavelike flowing forth of divine will taking the form of Śabd, the celestial sound current is illustrated by the following statement:

There was a motion in Him, which we can
describe as a wave. By this wave both
the True Lord (Sat Purush) and the
Negative Power (Kal Purush) were born. (40)

The resemblance of the above statement, to the following verse in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī reveals something about the way in which Bābā Sawan Singh relates to the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh:

In the beginning there was dhundukār (misty
chaos). The Lord Purush was in Sunn - Samādhi
(absorbed within Himself). Till then there
was no creation. When His Mauj surged, Shabd
became manifest and brought into Being the whole
of creation. (41)

However, interestingly enough, Bābā Sawan Singh tends to relate mauj to Bhānā and Hukām. Creation in his eyes is an expression of Hukām, the divine master plan, which is a product of Bhānā or God's conscious will. (42)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt, creation is seen not only as a product of God's wishful creation but also as a result of His self-expression. He repeats the Rādhāsoāmī belief that God's will is inseparably linked with His urge for divine self-expression. Bābā Sawan Singh is primarily interested in a causal process by which the creator evolves the creation by means of divine self-projection.

His account of the evolution of the universe is that the creation of the universe began when Śabd, the primal sound current, originating from the ultimate supreme Being, commenced to flow down in a process of discrimination, separating and halting and forming the different cosmic regions. (43) In the spiritual cosmology of the Beas school Śabd is seen as manifesting itself in five forms corresponding to the five primary regions of creation. Bābā Sawan Singh explains:

Since there are five primary regions in the creation, this one Shabd appears to be five. There two Shabds up to Trikutī; two from Trikutī to Satlok; and the fifth one is in Satlok. (44)

Interestingly enough, no mention at all is made in the Gurmat Siddhānt about Śabd reverberating through the universe as evā, mī, rhā, dhā - the first universal sounds. This Agra version of the Śabd theory is

probably ^{be} rejected by Bābā Sawan Singh as being not in keeping with Shiv Dayāl Singh's "true" teachings. (45)

The Rādhāsoāmī idea of divine self-descent that Bābā Sawan Singh proposes is clearly related to the idea of the "churning of the oceans" found in the creation myth of the Anurāg Sāgar. This Kabīr-panthī account of the creation of the lower worlds involves the idea that every churning of the cosmic ocean by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva brought forth the causal, astral and physical planes respectively. (46)

It could also be argued that Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of divine self-descent does bear some similarity to that of Gorakhnāth. The terminology of the Siddha Siddhānta-Paddhati is unmistakably Tantric and does not appear to have been adopted by the Rādhāsoāmī Satgurūs. Evenso, the Nāth account of the divine Śakti unfolding toward the phenomenal cosmic system certainly expresses the Rādhāsoāmī idea of the Śabd descending through the universe from God. (47)

It is believed that when the supreme One wished to bring the universe into being He created the a number of cosmic regions. The first of these was called Agam Lok (the inaccessible world), presided over by Agam Puruṣ (the inaccessible Being) (48) - the first individual manifestation of the nameless Lord, Anāmī Puruṣ. (49) The supreme creative energy, now working through Agam Puruṣ, brought into existence the next cosmic region below Him which is called Alakh Lok

(the invisible world) and is ruled by Alakh Puruṣ (the invisible Being). (50) Then, working through Him the Lord of creation Sat Puruṣ (the True Being) (51) appeared in the next cosmic level Sat Lok (true world). (52) In the Rādhāsoāmī scheme of creation it is Sat Puruṣ that carries out all creative activity. (53) He is responsible for the creation of the lower causal, astral and physical planes.

The Rādhāsoāmī grand hierarchy of the universe is a highly stratified and complicated one comprising eight grand divisions with countless subdivisions, zones and subzones region after region, plane after plane, each differing from the rest, each governed by a deity with powers and duties assigned to him by Sat Puruṣ. (54) This cosmographic scheme has been described as:

a galaxy of lords, rulers, creators, governors, all of the heavenly spheres who have been appointed by the supreme one to discharge the duties assigned to them in their respective regions. (55)

This cosmic scheme is considered by followers of the Rādhāsoāmī faith to be unique to its teachings and unknown in the other religious traditions other than Rādhāsoāmī Mat. It is believed to be the product of the Satgurū's higher spiritual experience not disclosed to adepts of the so-called "lower" schools of yoga. In this respect Johnson writes:

They know about the creation and order of the universe of so many parts from personal study and exploration. Beginning from the lowest stratum of earth and ranging upward to the highest heavens, the Masters know every foot of the ground. The non-material and supersensuous are just as familiar to them as are the rivers and mountains

of the terrestrial sphere. Besides their ability to see the entire past history of the universe, the universe as it is today is an open book to them. (56)

Bābā Sawan Singh confirms this belief when he writes:

The writings of the Saints are faithful records of their experiences in the higher spiritual regions. They are like signposts and milestones to seekers on the path of spirituality. (57)

Bābā Sawan Singh's Cosmic Scheme of Creation

The cosmic map that Bābā Sawan Singh talks about appears to be a modification of the one that has been described in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoamī (Poetry). The general cosmography appears to be the same as that of Shiv Dayāl Singh. However, the divisions of the different cosmic regions as described below are unique to the Beas school. There is another version at Agra as indicated below.

The Spiritual Plane

At the top end of Bābā Sawan Singh's cosmic map (58) lies the region of pure spirit known either as Dayal Des, Sat Lok or Sach Khand. (59) It is conceived as the plane of pure spirit participating directly in the nature of the ultimate supreme Being. This region is said to be both "at the beginning" and "out of time". It is "at the beginning" in the sense that this was the first level to be formed. It is "out of time"

because it is perceived as changeless, and as such, not subject to any kind of dissolution. (60) It is also limitless for as Johnson explains:

If the entire physical universe with its countless millions of suns and their planets were all gathered together in a single cluster... this entire ensemble would appear no more than a few specks floating in the clear and luminous sky of Sat Desh. (61)

It is from here that Sabd flowing from Sat Puruṣ creates the substrata of all the universes below it. In accordance with Beas beliefs, Bābā Sawan Singh talks of this region as having four subdivisions, Anāmi Lok (or Rādhāsoāmī Dhām), Agam Lok, Alakh Lok and Sat Lok. These subdivisions are however, seen as an integrated whole, i.e. Sat Lok itself. (62) This is in contrast to the Agra version which recognizes six distinct sublevels in Dayal Des', the highest being Rādhāsoāmī Dhām and the lowest Bhanwar Guphā. (63) Proponents of the Beas school, however, claim that Shiv Dayāl Singh meant to locate these four divisions as different aspects of one grand realm and not as independent separate regions. (64)

Whatever the method of dividing the zones of this cosmic region, the fact remains that the names used for the various subdivisions seem to have been first used in the Kabīr kī Sabdāvalī (65) which Bābā Sawan Singh refers to and comments upon in one of his discourses. (66)

Two stages below Anāmi Lok is Sat Lok which is highly effulgent and pure. Two spiritual currents are said to emanate from this zone, pervading all the regions below. The celestial melody resounding here is

believed to be that of the bagpipe. (67) The governing deity of this first complete region called Sat Lok or "the Father's House" (68) is the magnificent Sat Purus, of whose magnificence Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say:

The light of one thousand suns and
the same of moons would not compare
with the light that emanates from one
hair on the body of Sat Purush, the
True God who presides over Sat Lok
and all the universes and worlds above it. (69)

Directly below Sat Lok, acting as a kind of buffer between the pure spiritual regions and the causal plane is Bhanwar Guphā (70) where the flute (71) is heard resounding through its eighty eight thousand universes. (72)

The Causal Plane

The second grand division, the causal plane, is known in Rādhāsoāmī parlance as Brahmānd. This is the spiritual-material region. Here divine substance still predominates but is mixed with a certain amount of matter. The substance of this realm gradually becomes less and less concentrated as one descends towards the lower regions. It is the home of the three guṇas (73) and of the mind. Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of mind bears certain similarities to that of Kapila. However, the application of the term in the context of Rādhāsoāmī cosmology lends it a distinct flavour:

There are three minds, pind, brahmandi and
nij. The pindi mind works below the eye focus.

It has connection with the senses, so it has low desires and an outward and downward tendency. The friendship of the soul with it lowers and debases the soul. The brahmandi mind has good desires. It helps in the uplift, has an inward and upward tendency and works in Brahmand. The nij mind is at the top of the second stage, Trikutī, and in it lies the seed of all creation. (74)

Brahmāṇḍ is considered to be extremely vast in area when compared with the physical universe but small when compared with the first grand division above it. It is further divided into five subdivisions (75), two lower and three higher zones. The two lower zones are Banknāl (76) and Trikutī. (77) The higher zones are Pār Brahm, (78) Daswan Dwār (79) and Mahā Sunn. (80) The two lower divisions are seen as existing, in time and are subject to dissolution, (81) while the upper three divisions are not. (82)

Generally speaking, the Rādhāsoāmī cosmic theory of the Ages is that of the Purāṇas. However, it departs from the Purāṇic original in one important particular. There is the same emphasis on the physical and moral decline of the world, but the values that are assigned to the sequence of ages are partially inverted. The Kālīyuga is indeed an age of depravity and suffering, but it is also seen as, as era of unique opportunity. (83)

The causal plane is said to be the abode of the personification of negative power, Kāl or Kāl Puruṣ (84) - a creation of Sat Puruṣ. (85) He is the ruling deity of this plane and rules over the lower astral and physical planes. From the Rādhāsoāmī viewpoint Kāl is another name for

Nirāñjan. The Kabīr-panthīs use the term Nirāñjan to denote the deity who is believed to have taken possession of the lower cosmic planes. Through the seduction of māyā he is said to have fathered Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, the three major gods of the Hindu pantheon. Together with them he rules the world, keeping it bound to darkness and death. (86) This creation myth is often repeated in Rādhāsoāmī circles.

Though Kāl Puruṣ is perceived as being the Lord of karma, He is seen as having limited powers. He has no hold over the souls whose karmas he administers. Bābā Sawan Singh writes:

Kal or Dharam Rai administers as he is directed to by the higher True Being (Sat Purush) and he is not the creator . It is only the body that belongs to Him... He has no control over the soul, because souls are the children of the True Being (Sat Purush) and are immortal. (87)

Another interesting feature of the Rādhāsoāmī concept of mind is that it is seen as being an expression of Kāl Puruṣ:

Individual mind is Kal on a small scale. It is Kal's agent, attached to every soul to keep it out from the eye focus and keep it entangled in this world. (88)

Kāl Puruṣ is considered to be the enemy of the self, the archfiend of the universe. (89) He personifies time and death. Assisted by his minion māyā (90) he spreads his net of wordly attachment, trapping the selves and binding them to the cycle of birth and rebirth.

Māyā in the Gurnat Siddhant is the māyā of Kabīr and Gurū Nānak, and as such is not the cosmic illusion of classical Vedānta. (91) The world is indeed māyā but it is far from unreal, for it is an illusion only in the sense that it is accepted for what it is not. Bābā Sawan Singh sees impermanence as the essence of the world. It is real, but it is impermanent, in the sense that it is perishable. He who accepts the world as a thing of ultimate value and seeks true fulfillment in it is seen as engaging in self-deceit, for worldly things are but creations of māyā, and do not represent the higher reality, the living light of Sat Puruṣ.

Bābā Sawan Singh sees māyā as untruth. The expression of this untruth is the world. It is in worldly affections, in the desire to appropriate the worldly goods, that man's great temptation lies and succumbing to this temptation means involvement in untruth. The result can only be separation from God and continued transmigration.

The Astral Plane

The astral plane (92) lies nearest to the physical universe. It is called Anḍ or Sahansdal Kanwāl (93) and is ruled by Alakh Nirāñjan. It receives its name from the great cluster of lights that act as the powerhouse of the physical universe. It is also the region of countless melodies and harmonies, the most prominent of which is that of the conch. (94) This plane has a dark side (that of Kāl Puruṣ) and a lighted side (that of Sat Puruṣ). (95)

In the astral plane, material predominates. The astral plane constitutes the negative part of all the super physical zones and lies most distant from the positive pole of creation (Sat Lok). It is here that the heavens and the purgatories are housed together with all the angelic and satanic forces that attend to these. From the Rādhāsoāmī viewpoint it is the highest region accessible to all other schools of yoga that rely on breathing techniques. (96)

The astral plane is also seen as being the home of the so-called "lower religions". Here we see Bābā Sawan Singh voicing the Sant belief (97) so often repeated in the Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Poetry) (98) that all religions except Sant Mat are lower religions or religions of Kāl Puruṣ, mistaken for the supreme creator (Sat Puruṣ). The manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh expresses his belief in the superiority of Sant Mat as a path of salvation, is expressed thus:

No other teachings besides the teachings of the Saints (Sant Mat) lead to the Truth. The Truth is the same as that which Kabir expounded, also Guru Nanak and his successors, as well as many other Saints, and now the Radha Soami teaching. (99)

The doctrine upon which this claim is based is the following. The original creation of Sat Puruṣ is distinctly different from the "three worlds" created by Kāl Puruṣ. In the regions above Kal, creation proceeds as originally planned, whereas the three worlds are fallen. Reincarnation takes place within the framework of Kāl's law, the law of karma, in one of these three worlds. It is possible to experience the two higher worlds (i.e. the astral and causal planes) through yogic techniques and

organized religions. However, with these methods it is not possible to attain liberation in Sat Lok without initiation into Sant Mat by a perfect Master, the Satgurū.

The Physical Plane

The fourth grand division is called Pīṇḍ and is the physical plane. Here matter predominates with a small percentage of mind and a still smaller amount of spirit. In this lowest of all divisions of creation there is but little light and a very low grade of light when compared with the astral or causal plane. Indeed, if compared to the spiritual plane this world is in complete darkness.

The substance of this region is full of imperfection due to the paucity of spirit-force at this pole. Here arise all the manifold difficulties experienced by mortals. As one leaves this lowest plane and begins to ascend toward the higher planes light increases, hence more life, more beauty and more happiness. This is entirely due to the increase in the amount of spirit-force in the respective higher planes.

The physical plane is seen as being the home of the four main life forms (100) and the arena in which the cycle of birth and rebirth is enacted. (101) Like the six heavenly bodies from Sat Lok down to the astral plane, there are six lower or physical regions below them in Pīṇḍ, which, in Sant Mat, are perceived as reflections of the heavenly regions. These six regions are the six Cakras, all of which relate to the physical

body. (102) Bābā Sawan Singh confirms the Sant practice of acknowledging the yoga cakra theory. However, like his Sant counterparts, he stresses the limited efficacy of conventional yoga techniques. (103)

Summary

In this chapter we examined Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas on the origin, meaning and the development of the universe. We illustrated how his cosmological thinking relied heavily on Shiv Dayāl Singh and Kabīr-panthī sources. We did this by outlining the manner in which the notion of the pre-creation state was presented in the Gurmat Siddhānt. We highlighted what Bābā Sawan Singh meant by "God being in Himself" before creation. We also examined his ideas on the mystery of creation. In both instances the influence of the writings of Shiv Dayāl Singh was noted. We then examined Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of the divine will to create and related it to Shiv Dayāl Singh's idea of mauj. In discussing the idea of divine self-descent we also noted the influence of Kabīr-panthī and Nāth writings.

Our discussion of Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas about the structure of the universe highlighted the Beas version of the Rādhāsāmī scheme of creation. We drew attention to the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh frequently used Kabīr-panthī terms, borrowed from Shiv Dayāl Singh.

NOTES

1. Most of Bābā Sawan Singh's statements on the origin and creation of the universe appear mainly in Volume IV of the Gurmat Siddhānt. (See for example, pp. lxvi-lxvii, 5, 14, 20-21, 26, 34, 37, 49, 65, 68, 108, 123, 133, 135, 189 and 190). These are supplemented by references in Discourses on Sant Mat and The Dawn of Light, two other works that contain statements which explain and strengthen much of what has been said in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

In this study cosmogony means the origin of the universe. Cosmology refers to the meaning of the universe, while cosmography denotes the structure of the universe.

2. See Keay, Kabir And His Followers, pp. 112-134.

3. Unless otherwise stated, the edition of the Bīlak used here is that of Shah The Bīlak of Kabir. We have chosen this translation instead of the one by Linda Hess and Shukdev Singh since Shah has undertaken a complete translation of the text as opposed to Hess's and Singh's part translation.

4. The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir edited by A Singh is the text referred to here.

5. As many as forty works associated with Kabir have been collected in the eleven volumed Kabir Sagar also called the Bodha Sāgar, said to have been edited by Yugalanand, a Kabir-panthi sādhu. It has, however, been pointed out that of these forty only the Atma bodha (Volume 9) can be linked to Kabir. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, p. 278.

6. There can be no doubt that the Kabirpanth owes a lot to this individual. Keay is of the opinion that next to Kabir, Dharam Dās stands out as the Kabirpanth's most outstanding leader. See Keay, Kabir And His Followers, p. 97. Dharam Dās figures prominently in a number of Kabir-panthi works which take the form of supposed dialogues between himself and Kabir.

7. See Keay, Kabir And His Followers, p. 113.

8. The Kabir scholar Charlotte Vaudeville, for example, lists eleven different principal editions of the Bīlak. See Vaudeville, Kabir Vol I pp. 333-335. For analyses on the three main bodies of writings attributed to Kabir, see Vaudeville, as above, pp. 49-80 and L. Hess, "Three Kabir Collections: A Comparative Study", in Schomer and McLeod, The Santa Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, pp. 111-143.

9. Keay, Kabir And His Followers, p. 51.

10. Vaudeville, Kabir Vol. I p. 57.

11. Except for the introductory poem in the Bīlak (Ād-Mangal, pp. 47-49), Kabīr, unlike his followers had little to say about creation. In fact, it is doubtful if he had a clearly conceived cosmological system and it is certainly next to impossible to reconstruct a cosmology from his verses, if he had one. This view has been voiced, among others by Wilson, Religious Sects of the Hindus p. 53.
12. The main edition of this text is the one edited by Swami Yugalanand entitled Anurāg-sāgar, (Bombay, 1948). It forms the basis of the earlier mentioned English translation used as our main reference.
13. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, p. 278.
14. See Chaturvedi, Uttarī Bhārat kī sant paramparā, p. 282.
15. This point has been recognized both by non-sectarian and sectarian writers. See Juergensmeyer, "The Radhasoami Revival of the Sant Tradition", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India, p. 354 and Russell Perkins in the Introduction to The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir, p. xxxii.
16. Ram, With the Three Masters Vol II p. 187
17. Although we have chosen the Bīlak and Anurāg Sāgar as our main references, we recognize that there are a number of Kabir-panthī texts that contribute to our understanding of Kabir-panthī cosmology. These are, among others, the Amar Mūl, the Kabir Bānī, the Bhavatārān, the Prithvī Khand, the Nirāñjan Bodh, the Jñāna-Prakāśa and the Kabir-i-Mansur. Information on these works appear in Keay, Kabir And His Followers, pp. 117-129.
18. Möller's contention that the works of Kabir provide the main backdrop for Rādhāsōmī cosmology is misleading. It clouds the distinction that must be made between works that can safely be attributed to Kabir and those belonging to the corpus of Kabir-panthī writings. See Möller, Der Rādhāsōmī Satsang und die Mystik der Gottesknechte, p. 29.
19. Gurnat Siddhant Vol IV p. 14.
20. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 170.
21. See for example, Rg Veda 10.129.1-7.
22. See for example, Aitareya Upanisad 1.1, Tittiriya Upanisad II. 7.1. and Bṛadāraṇyaka Upanisad I (4) 1.
23. See for example, Srī Bhāṣya 1.1.1.3
24. See Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, p. 320.

25. For examples see Ramkali M.1. (12) Siddha Goshti, Adi Granth p. 939 and Maru Solhas M.1. (2-15), Adi Granth pp. 1035- 1036

26. See A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurag Sagar of Kabir, p. 20.

27. See Shah, The Bilak of Kabir, pp. 41-43.

28. Translated as Bachan 25 Shabd 2 in Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 171 .

29. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 14. In the case of both these passages (refer to notes 28 and 29 above), one cannot help but be reminded of the following passage from the Mundaka Upanisad (III [1] 8):

He is not grasped by the eye nor even by speech
nor by other sense organs, nor by austerity nor
by work, but when one's (intellectual) nature
is purified by the light of knowledge then alone
he, by meditation, sees Him who is without parts.

(Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, p. 688).

See also chapter II note 3 of this study.

30. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 1.

31. Gurmat Siddhant Vol II p. 107 .

32. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. 2 and 3. Johnson explains the Rādhāsōāmī position on this matter as follows:

The great Masters do not concern themselves
too much with how or when the universe came
into existence. They know this also but
do not attach any great importance to the
problem. They set themselves the far
more important task of liberating souls from
this world bondage.

(The Path of the Masters, p. 200).

33. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 3. The idea put forward here is not unique to Bābā Sawan Singh or the Rādhāsōāmī tradition. In the Yoga Sūtra (III.26), Patañjali voices the belief that the secret of creation and the order of the universe can be discovered only through meditation. See J.H. Woods, The Yoga - System of Patañjali. (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 254 -260.

34. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p 2 .

35. Adi Granth p. 879 .

36. The term mauj has often been loosely translated to mean pleasure, whim or delight. The most fitting translation of the Rādhāsoāmī use of the term appears to be Lawrence Babb's "sportive will as pleasure". See Babb, Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition, p. 37.

37. See Brahmasūtra II. 1. 32-3. The implication of creation as divine play in the Brahmasūtra is also dramatically expressed and reinforced in several popular Hindu creation myths. For details see D.R. Kinsley, "Creation as play in Hindu spirituality", in Studies in Religion 4 (1974-1975), pp. 108 -119.

38. The concept of līlā in the Vedānta seeks to convey that Isvara creates worlds out of the sheer joy of doing so. This creative act is viewed as a desireless release of energy. See E. Deutsch and J.A.B. van Buitenen, Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction (Honolulu, 1969), p. 427.

39. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol II pp. 99, 108.

40. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 65.

41. S. Singh Sār Bachan Part II (30) p. 79. Interesting in this quotation is the word dhundukār. In the Tantric work Sūnya-purāṇa, the word dhundukāra describes the all-pervading darkness and haze of the pre-creation state. See C. Banerjee (ed.), Sūnya-purāṇa (place and date not given).

42. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 81. The tendency of equating mauj with Bhānā could be seen as having developed out of the following quotation from the Ādi Granth, "He by His own Will created all the universe. He, whom He wills, loves His Will". (Quoted as M 3 Maru 1064-1 in Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 81).

43. References to the creative agency of Sabd abound in the Gurmat Siddhānt. See for example, Volume IV pages xcix, 17, 108, 122, 126, 144, 196 and 197. The general tone of these statements seem to suggest a recasting of sorts of Bachan 1 Shabd 3 of Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Poetry). See Puri, Rādhāsoāmī Teachings, pp. 46-47.

Refer also to Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry), Bachan 9 Shabd 2, (1-20), pp. 216 - 219.

Johnson's definition of the creative agency of Sabd serves as a useful mirror of Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of the idea:

The Audible Life Stream is the Supreme Creator himself vibrating through space. It is the wave of spiritual life going forth from the Creator to every living thing in the universe.

(The Path of the Masters, p. 374).

44. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 160. The Agra school uses the term bhandār to describe the cosmic regions, while at Beas the term used is khand. The choice of the Punjābī term at Beas is understandable, given the strong Sikh presence there.

The idea of the five Śabds propounded here is, in essence the pāñc amrit doctrine of Sikhism as illustrated in verses such as Sarang M 4 (1) Ādi Granth p. 1201 and Rāg Bhairō M3 (3), Ādi Granth p. 1128. Bābā Sawan Singh talks of Sant Mat as "the Path of the Five Shabds". See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p 44. See also Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry), Bachan 8 Shabd 12 (1-25), pp. 201-204.

45. For an analysis of the Agra mystical sound doctrine, see Möller, Der Rādhāsvāmī Satsaṅg und die Mystik der Gotteskinder, pp. 89-90.

46. See A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir, pp. 40 - 44. We find this account of the Purānic idea of "the churning of the oceans" in the Bhavatārān, another Kabir-panthī text. For a description of the contents of this work see Keay, Kabir And His Followers pp. 125 -126. See also Vaudeville, Kabir Vol. I p. 35. Bābā Sawan Singh mentions the creation of the "Universes of universes" and "the nether lands and upper regions". (Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 17 and 37).

47. A summary of Gorakhnāth's Śiva-Śakti-vilasa doctrine appears in A. K. Banerjee, The Philosophy of Gorakhnāth, (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 81 -87.

48. Agam Puruṣ is also called the unfathomable One.

49. Shiv Dayāl Singh repeatedly used Anāmī Puruṣ to mean the unnamable, infinite One. In the Gurmat Siddhānt, Anāmī Puruṣ is referred as the "Lord of Lords" (Hari Rai) (Vol. IV p 24) who is "all-pervading and is running the entire great Universes of universes, the Lord of all universes". (Vol. IV p 7). See also page 62 of the same volume.

50. Alakh Puruṣ is also known as the Lord of the indescribable region.

51. Literally, the true Lord, the appellation of the ruling deity of the fifth cosmic region above the physical universe.

52. The term is used here much in the same manner as it appears in Amar Mūl (Root of Immortality), a well-known Kabir-panthī text composed about 1800. In this poem of some five thousand stanzas, Sat Lok is conceived as the first imperishable cosmic region. For information on the Amar Mūl see Keay, Kabir And His Followers, pp. 117-118. See also Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry), Bachan 5 Shabd 2 (24), p. 112.

53. The myth surrounding the creative activity of Sat Puruṣ figures prominently in a number of Kabir-panthī texts like Amar Mūl (Parts II and IV), Bīlak (pp. 51 -55) and The Ocean of Love (pp. 36-74). Though

Bābā Sawan Singh does briefly mention the Anurāg Sāgar there is no indication of him subscribing to the Kabīr-panthī creation myth in its entirety. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 67.

54. See Gurmat Siddhānt, Vol. IV pp. 68-69.

55. Johnson, The Path of the Masters p. 232. See also Möller, Der Rādhāsvāmī Satsaṅg und die Mystik der Gottestöne, p. 86.

56. Johnson, The Path of the Masters, p. 200.

57. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 8. Once again we find Bābā Sawan Singh duplicating the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh who says:

The teachings of the Sant is
based upon personal experience,
and so also its interpretation. It
is beyond the reach of the intellect
and it is not possible for merely
learned people to understand it
correctly.

(S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II [203] p. 136).

58. Our presentation of Bābā Sawan Singh's cosmic map has been pieced together from studied assumptions about his cosmological beliefs. These assumptions are based on scattered statements found in the Gurmat Siddhānt, Discourses on Sant Mat, Spiritual Gems and The Dawn of Light. We have also relied on a cosmographical diagram obtained at Sawan Āśram, New Delhi in 1984. This diagram, we have reason to believe, is representative of the Beas interpretation of the Radhasoami cosmic scheme. It was circulated by followers of Thakar Singh, one of the gurūs owing allegiance to Bābā Sawan Singh. See Appendix for chart.

59. Bābā Sawan Singh uses the Puñjābī term Sach Khand interchangeably with Sat Lok. Strangely enough, he does not use the Puñjābī names of the other four cosmic regions mentioned in the Ādi Granth. These are (in Rādhāsoāmī parlance), Dharm Khand, Gian Khand, Sarm Khand and Karm Khand. Neither does he make any attempt to relate Gurū Nānak's cosmographical scheme to his own. A brief explanation of the usage of the five Puñjābī terms mentioned above appears in W.O. Cole, The Guru in Sikhism (London, 1982), pp. 51-53. See also Discourses on Sant Mat, pp. 27-29 and 234-235.

Dayal Des and Rādhāsoāmī Dhām are names preferred by the Agra branch of the Radhasoami movement. See Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry), Bachan 5 Shabd 2 (10,31), pp. 111 and 113.

60. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. lxvi.

61. Johnson, The Path of the Masters, p. 206.

62. For an explanation of the Beas view see Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, pp. 175-176.

63. See Appendix for charts.

64. There is evidence to suggest that Shiv Dayāl Singh did talk of Sat Lok as one integrated cosmic zone. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 175.

65. For a graphic presentation of these subdivisions in the Kabir ki Sabdavalī see Möller, Der Rādhāsvāmī Satsaṅg und die Mystik der Gottesknechte, p. 40.

66. ^{S Singh,} Discourses on Sant Mat, pp. 199 - 241.

67. There are a number of different versions of the sounds heard in Sat Lok. Bābā Sawan Singh has also been known to have spoken of the melody of the veena (Indian stringed instrument) resounding through the spiritual plane. See Discourses on Sant Mat p. 27.

68. Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 27.

69. Discourses on Sant Mat pp. 235-236.

70. Here again Bābā Sawan Singh's reliance on the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Poetry) is evident. In Bachan 26 Shabd 4 we read:

Now for the Fourth Stage doth the soul
get ready. O soul! go thou there by
preserving the treasure of Shabd. The
soul beholdeth the hill of "Bhanwar
Gupha", where to the Sound of "Sohang"
doth it listen. There ariseth the sharp
melody of the Flute; and the white sun
doth the soul behold.

(Translated by Puri, Radhasoami Teachings,
p. 182)

The term Bhanwar Gufā appears in the Mundaka Upaniṣad (III.1.7) and the Kabir Granthavalī (p. 127). See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, pp. 28 and 288 for notes on this. See also Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry), Bachan 10 Shabd 2 (7), p. 240.

71. See Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 232.

72. See Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 231.

73. Besides being the "home" of the three gunas (constituents) this plane also houses the "five tattvas (elements), twenty-five prakrtis (tendencies) that determine temperament". (Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 192).

74. The Dawn of Light, p. 118. A detailed discussion of Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of the mind follows in a later chapter.

75. The exact number of subdivisions vary from four to six. We base our division on the diagram obtained at Sawan Āsram. See note 58 of this chapter. It is interesting to note that the Agra school sees the causal plane as being inclusive of the astral plane. The Beas school on the other hand, sees the astral plane as being a separate cosmic zone. See Appendix for chart.

76. For a description of Banknāl (Bunk Nāl, "the curved pipe") see Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 21.

77. For a description of Trikutī refer to Discourses on Sant Mat, p.

28. For similarities with the description in Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Poetry) Bachan 26 Shabd 2 see Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 188.

The term trikutī (the place of three parts) is one of several yogic expressions adapted from the Nāths, which has become a standard part of the Sant esoteric jargon. See Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and Universals of Religious Perception, p. 61.

78. Pār Brahm is also called Sunnā (the void), a Tāntric Buddhist term found, among others in the writings of Tulsī Sāhib and absorbed into the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī by Shiv Dayāl Singh. See Gold, The Lord as Gurū in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and the Universals of Religious Perception p. 129 for a discussion of this point. Tulsī Sāhib's use of the term in his Sabdāvalī (Part II Tappa 38, p. 11) is illustrated in Puri and Sethi's translation of the verse. See Puri and Sethi, Tulsī Sāhib. Saint of Hathras, pp. 65-66.

79. The term Daswan Dwar is derived from dasam duār (tenth door) which has Tāntric connotations. In Tāntric terminology it is the tenth orifice (besides the nine natural orifices of the body), through which the spirit enters or leaves the body. A description of this cosmic realm called which Bābā Sawan Singh calls the tenth gate appears in Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 22. See also Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 323.

80. The Tāntric term Mahā Sunnā (the great void) is also known as Mahā Kālā and is at the upper most limit of the causal plane. In the Agra version of the cosmic map the voids (i.e. Sunnā and Mahā Sunnā) do not appear as separate zones. For notes on the Tāntric use of the word in the Pañca-krama, see Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, p. 47.

81. The doctrine of dissolution or pralaya is accepted by all the Hindu systems except the Mīmāṃsā. See S. Dasgupta, History of Hindu Philosophy Vol I, (Cambridge, 1969), p. 232 for details. The prevailing belief in Rādhāsoāmī circles is that dissolution only effects the universes from Trikutī downwards. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xvi.

82. Grand dissolution is said to occur from Daswan Dwar to the upper most limit of Bhanwar Guphā. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV, p. 27. See also Vol I p. xvi.
83. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol II pp. 10-13 and Vol IV p. 239.
84. Kāl Purus is also known as Negative Power, Nirānjan, Dharam Rai and Yam Rāj (Lord of Death). Both these terms are often used by Kabīr-panthīs. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 60-71.
85. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 67.
86. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 60.
87. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 62.
88. Spiritual Gems, p. 177. Here we see Baba Sawan Singh repeating an interpretation of the mind as found in A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir. (see p. 40). In this work Kabīr is seen explaining to Dharam Dās that Kāl does not usually manifest itself except as individual mind.
89. The idea of Kāl Purus being the archfiend of the Rādhāsoāmī universe is a confirmation of a belief central to Kabīr-panthī cosmology. See Keay, Kabir And His Followers, pp. 140-141. See also Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 6 and Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, pp. 207-208.
90. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 66.
91. We agree here with P.D. Devanandan, (The Concept Of Māyā. An Essay in the Historical Survey of the Hindu Theory of the World, (London, 1950), p. 169) on this point. Vaudeville (Kabir Vol I pp. 299-304) provides an excellent compilation of sākhs attributed to Kabīr, demonstrating his use of the term māyā in the Kabir Granthāvalī.
92. Bābā Sawan Singh's description of the astral plane is a simplified version of the one in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry). See for example Maheshwari's translation of Bachan 26 Answer 1 (Part I-IV), pp. 91-98 for Shiv Dayāl Singh's description of the astral plane.
93. Bābā Sawan Singh's description of the astral plane appears in Discourses on Sant Mat, pp. 22 and 229-230.
94. Shiv Dayāl Singh is probably responsible for introducing this idea. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, pp. 189-192.
95. See Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 20. See also S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (176) p 20.

82. Grand dissolution is said to occur from Daswan Dwar to the upper most limit of Bhanwar Guphā. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV, p. 27. See also Vol I p. xvi.
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84. Kāl Puruṣ is also known as Negative Power, Nirānjan, Dharam Rai and Yam Rāj (Lord of Death). Both these terms are often used by Kabīr-panthīs. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV pp. 60-71.
85. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 67.
86. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 60.
87. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. 62.
88. Spiritual Gems, p. 177. Here we see Baba Sawan Singh repeating an interpretation of the mind as found in A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir, (see p. 40). In this work Kabīr is seen explaining to Dharam Dās that Kāl does not usually manifest itself except as individual mind.
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94. Shiv Dayāl Singh is probably responsible for introducing this idea. See Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, pp. 189-192.
95. See Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 20. See also S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (176) p 20.

96. According to Rādhāsoāmī Mat, the use of breathing techniques only allows spiritual ascent up to the astral plane. See Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 219.

97. Two such examples reflecting this attitude are to be found in the Bījak (Ramsini 32:1) and the Adi Granth (Sri Rāg Shaloka M 3 [1] p 85). See also Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV pp. lxxxī-lxxxiv. We will return to this idea later in the chapter on Bābā Sawan Singh's "unity of religions" thesis.

98. See for example Puri's translation of Bachan 29 Shabd 18 in Radhasoami Teachings, p. 199.

99. The Dawn of Light, pp. 133-134. See also Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 68. This seems to be a more moderate stance than the one adopted by Shiv Dayāl Singh. His outright rejection of other paths of salvation appears in Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry), Bachan 23 Shabd 1 (1-56), pp. 47-56.

100. In Sant Mat the Hindu classification of the four life forms is adhered to. The egg born are called Andaj, the seed born, Uttbhuj, the moisture born, Setaj (Ushmaj) and the womb born, Jeraaj (Pindaj). See Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry), Bachan 22 Shabd 1 (1), pp 17-18. for such a classification. Bābā Sawan Singh adheres to this classification.

101. There is talk here of the "cycle of 84" (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. 65). In the Hindu tradition the number of forms of existences is usually said to be eighty four million. We are only able to speculate about the Rādhāsoāmī practice of reducing the number to 84. It might perhaps have been done for reasons of convenience or it may also be a practice borrowed from the Kabīr-panthis. There is for example, evidence of such a practice in A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir, (p. 45) A brief note on the use of this term in so-called Kabīrtan texts appears in Hess and S. Singh, The Bījak of Kabir, p. 176. For a detailed breakdown by Bābā Sawan Singh of the eighty four million forms of life, see "Divinity of Man", in Sat Sandesh 22 (1987), p. 18.

102. In the Gurmat Siddhant (Vol. IV, p. lxvi), the following cakra classification is used:

1. Guda Chakra, Muladhar (anus plexus)
2. Indriya Chakra, Swadhista (genital plexus)
3. Nabhi Chakra, Manipur (navel plexus)
4. Hridaya Chakra, Anahat (heart plexus)
5. Kanth Chakra, Visedudh (throat plexus)

6. Netra Chakra, Agaya (eye plexus)

103. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. IV p. lxvii. A discussion of Babā Sawan Singh's attitude towards other yogic disciplines follows in the chapter on Surat Sabd Yoga.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF SATGURŪ IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

The centrality of the gurū and the pivotal role he occupies in the Hindu belief system remains a striking characteristic of Hinduism. It is a general Hindu belief that human perfectability is only conceivable through a system of gurū oriented ethico-spiritual training. For Hindus religion is manifested or embodied among other things, in the continuing presence of the gurū,

Etymological studies (1) indicate that the word gurū carries a variety of meanings. Among these, the most frequently highlighted are "dispeller of darkness" and "weighty one". The syllable "gu" is often interpreted to signify "darkness" and "rū" that which eradicates it. The term gurū is therefore taken to mean "destroyer of darkness". (2) Gonda explains that the tendency to associate the word "gurū" with "heavy" or "weighty" illustrates the belief that the accomplishments of the guru are characterized by an uncommon weight. (3) Mlecko, commenting on the multiplicity of meanings attached to the term gurū observes that:

if the word "guru" means many things,
it is because the guru is many things.
For the guru is a teacher, counselor,
father-image, mature ideal, hero,
source of strength, even divinity
integrated into one personality. (4)

In order to meaningfully introduce Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of Satgurū (true or perfect gurū), it is necessary to have some idea of the gurū concept in the three traditions that have noticeably influenced Rādhāsoāmī thinking. These are the Tāntric, bhakti and Sant traditions.

A distinctive element in the Tāntric tradition is its emphasis on the indispensability of the dīkṣāgurū (initiating gurū). The dīkṣāgurū plays a central role in the gurūvāda doctrine (doctrine of the spiritual perceptor). In Tāntrism, dīkṣā (initiation) is seen as a process by which the gurū transfers his vital energy and spiritual powers to the devotee via the gurmantra (mantra of the gurū). This is supposed to purify him by removing the inner layers of ignorance caused by karmic actions and māyā. Dīkṣā is therefore seen as a sort of rebirth into a new existence with access to transcendental bliss. (5) The gurūvāda doctrine also presents the gurū as a transmitter of truth. Being the living embodiment of God, he is seen as the only real and reliable source of truth. (6) The way to the truth is to be sought by submitting to his will and obeying his instructions.

It is also in the medieval Indian Tāntric tradition that we see the personalization of the deity in a different form. The idea here is one of God "descending" to the Tāntric gurū. The gurū in turn, is conceived as the jīvanmukta who "ascends" to God. He is viewed as the jīvanmukta who has attained liberation while in the physical body. It is this gurū who dominates the entire Tāntric sādhanā (7) and is spoken of in highly exalted terms. (8)

In the bhakti movement the charismatic, self-realized dīkṣagurū triumphed over the Vedic ācārya. Emphasis shifted from Brahmanic ritualism, intellectualism and legalism to theistic devotionism. Within the context of gurūbhakti the gurū assumed God-like qualities. The gurū was revered and extravagant respect was paid to him.

Rāmānuja's belief that liberation was attainable mainly through bhakti provided a rational basis for Hindu devotionism. It was this devotionism that was to have a great effect on gurūhood. It was the gurū who often became the focus for that intense devotion which Rāmānuja prescribed.

Among the bhakti philosophers Nimbārka developed the idea of gurūpassatī. (9) He was followed in the thirteenth century by Jñānesvar who extolled the divine gurū (10) as the complete focus of the devotee's attention. (11) Rāmadāsa's admiration for the gurū was so great that he considered the true gurū more approachable than God. (12)

Gurū deification and worship also found expression within the major Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite bhakti sects. The Vaiṣṇavite sect of Vallabha, for example, painted a highly exalted picture of the gurū. This appears repeatedly in the sect's favourite text, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Among the Virasaivites of the twelfth century, the gurū is accorded a high place in the astravarana doctrine. (13) The gurū was even considered more worthy of reverence than Śiva because without the gurū there would be no union with the deity. (14)

It would not be incorrect to say then that the concept of divinity coupled with the worship of the gurū was central to the philosophy of the bhakti cults. Commenting on gurūbhakti within the bhakti sects Spencer observes:

Being himself one with God, the guru was worshipped as God, and such worship was regarded as a means of union. Images of the chief gurus were erected in the great temples. Devotion to the guru was placed on equal footing with devotion to God. (15)

Gurū devotion has found some of its clearest expression in the Sant tradition. Most of the early Sants exalted the Satgurū and rejected the ritualism related to the gods. (16) The Satgurū was viewed as the sole available source of spiritual power, the seat of great religious mystery and the object of personal devotion. Sometimes he was portrayed as a being that dwells within, a sort of inner voice or spiritual conscience. The early Sants often extolled the Satgurū as a manifestation of the Divine in human form. At other times he was described in very concrete human terms. However, which living person the Sants actually had in mind when they spoke of the human gurū is not always clear. This, as we have already pointed out earlier, (17) is especially problematic when one talks of the Satgurū referred to by Kabīr (18) and Gurū Nānak. (19)

In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition the Satgurū is the object of great veneration. He appears not only as the mediator of the Divine. He is also unmistakeably identified with God. Furthermore the Satgurū is seen as being able to offer something of his identity to the disciple.

(20) In Rādhāsoāmī literature spiritual power is perceived as normally moving through established channels. The devotee's access to these channels is through specific sources, in this case, the Satgurū. It is the Satgurū who is perceived as being capable of delivering spiritual power through his own person. One of the central beliefs of the tradition is that spiritual power can be transmitted by a living Satgurū through lineage. (21) It is with this idea of lineage that we find the concept of a line of Satgurūs who share the nature of the Divine.

The notion of such a fellowship is repeatedly highlighted in Rādhāsoāmī literature. Most of what has been said in the tradition about lineage can be found in the writings of Tulsī Sāhib. In the Ghat Rāmāyana (Vol I) the idea of a Sant lineage is implied in the following manner:

Now we find one separate nameless Lord
 Beyond the void and great void.
 The Lord is beloved of the Sants;
 Sants make their court at his abode.
 No one knows the secrets there,
 Though Nanak and Kabir Das tell us,
 And Dadu, Dariya and Raidas;
 Inapproachable enjoyment for Nabha and Mira.
 And many other Sants have sung about the in-
 approachable path
 After having reached its rank. (22)

This analysis of the concept of the Satgurū in the Gurmat Siddhant is primarily concerned with Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of the Satgurū as the true living gurū. In the following sections we shall examine his belief that the Satgurū is the embodiment of the supreme Being; the only source of revelation and the essential means of salvation.

What interests us here are the concepts of Godman, Śabdgurū, Gurudev and living Satgurū or Gurūavatār.

His classification of Satgurū into three categories and two types will be studied. We shall deal with his concept of Sādhgurū, Sant/Satgurū and Param Sant/Satgurū in conjunction with his ideas about the born Satgurū as opposed to the trained Satgurū. The notion of pseudo gurū will also be discussed.

The Definition of Satgurū

Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of Satgurū rests on his simultaneous use of the terms Sant Satgurū and Satgurū. (23) This practice is confusing. We are first led to believe that all Satgurūs are Sants but not all Sants are necessarily gurūs. (24) What is meant here is that Satgurūs are those who perform salvatory functions, something which not all Sants are commissioned by God to do. This statement is problematic in that it contradicts an earlier statement that all Satgurūs are Sants. By translating "Param Sants" to mean either "great saints" and "great gurus" Bābā Sawan Singh appears to be saying that all "great saints" are "great gurus". (25)

He speaks of the gurū as being the mother, father, teacher (ācārya) and Satgurū. He does not limit his understanding of ācārya to its early Vedic usage to mean the teacher of the Vedas. (26) His definition of ācārya is an extended one. It includes "the academic

teachers also" though he does not specify what he means by "academic teachers". (27) The idea of the four gurūs is almost certainly based on the Hindu Sāstras (28) but he makes no attempt to acknowledge his source and is quick to emphasize that it is the Satgurū who "imparts spiritual teachings only". (29)

This emphasis on the spiritual functions of the Satgurū reveals something about the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh relates to the conventional Hindu definition of gurū. (30) It appears that he is committed to the view that the word gurū is derived from the Sanskrit root "gri" meaning "one who calls". He writes:

One who practises the Shabd is a perfect Master or perfect Guru. This is evident if we consider the word Guru etymologically. Guru is a Sanskrit word. It comes from the root "Gri", which means to call or speak or utter a sound. One who bestows the Shabd, one who practises the divine Sound of the Shabd or is connected with the Shabd is a perfect Guru. (31)

This explanation helps us understand the fact, that for Bābā Sawan Singh, the term Satgurū has exclusive spiritual connotations. The Satgurū "who is the one who calls" is one who not only experiences the inner voice of God within himself but reacts by making it manifest to those who genuinely seek it. (32) In the Ādi Granth we find a similar view being expressed. (33)

The Concept of the Satgurū as Godman

The picture of the Satgurū painted in the Gurmat Siddhānt is one common to the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. The Satgurū is seen as the human embodiment of God. He is the human pole at which God manifests himself. The Satgurū is conceived as God's inner voice, i.e. that mystical expression of God known as Śabd or Nām. The Satgurū is presented as the inner gurū who appears in various forms on the different inner planes and as perceived by the initiate during meditation. He is also seen as the gem of humanity who has completed his spiritual evolution and is therefore considered to be perfect.

Bābā Sawan Singh identifies the Satgurū with the divine principle of truth. In so doing he couches the concept of Satgurū in terms often reserved for God. (34) Since the Satgurū is seen as the embodiment of truth he is also said to be absolute, changeless and ultimately real. The Satgurū is said to be the true instrument of God's will. He is commissioned by God to reveal His truth to humanity. God, it is said, reveals Himself in the most extraordinary manner, clearly and perfectly to the Satgurū and the Satgurū in turn reveals God's truth to humanity. The Satgurū therefore fulfills the function of enlightening the seekers of truth about God's divine expression, i.e. Śabd. If Śabd is the highest truth then so is the Satgurū. The following passage from the Gurmat Siddhānt illustrates this view:

The Sat Guru (true spiritual Teacher)
is a manifestation of the Lord, in whom
Sat (Truth) is shining and who is indis-
tinguishable from Truth. Truth permeates Him.
He has become alive by merging into the Lord.

He is a pure being. He is truth in human form
He is the store-house of knowledge and the
source of Bhakti (Devotion). He has the power
to take the souls to their distant Home by
making them follow the True Path. He is a
God-man. (35)

Bābā Sawan Singh also sees the Satgurū as God in human form. This is basically a reflection of the Sikh dictum that the body is the temple of God. (36) He subscribes to the Sant view that the Satgurū is the interior voice of God within the depths of the human soul. Following the Sikh Gurūs, he argues that God communicates the truth through Śabd or Nām. The Word is "spoken" to man's inner understanding by the Satgurū. The Satgurū is thus, in a primary sense, the "voice" of God. God is revealed through His Name, expressed as the Word that is spoken inwardly by the Satgurū. As in the Ādi Granth, the three key words (Nām, Śabd and Satgurū) appear repeatedly in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

The Satgurū as we have seen appears as internal to the initiate's experience. As such he appears as the God of interior religion. (37) There can be no doubt then that Bābā Sawan Singh relates to the philosophy of the interior path of spirituality (38) in the same manner as his earlier Sant counterparts did. This idea of the Satgurū being the centre of sacredness is one which is central to Kabīr's mystical doctrine. (39) Kabīr's ideas about the interior Satgurū being the mystical voice of God reinforces the Sant rejection of all forms of external religious expression. (40) It represents a rejection of what is considered by the Sants to be an illusory external manifestation of the Divine. The only Satgurū that matters

is God's representative on earth. This concurs with the view put forward in the Gurnat Siddhant. (41) Bābā Sawan Singh expresses his teachings in the following manner:

The perfect Masters are those who have indistinguishably become one with the Lord. They are born in human form according to the wishes of the Lord, so that they may take souls from the lower regions and unite them with the Lord. (42)

Although the Masters have assumed human forms similar to our own and live amongst us, yet they live with the Lord of all regions and universes. They appear to be bound to earth because of their bodies, but they live beyond the seven skies. (43)

The Satgurū is considered to be one with God by virtue of his being a God-realized being. (44) Since he is in human form, the terms "God-in-man" and "God-plus-man" are deemed appropriate. Bābā Sawan Singh views the Satgurū to be human in his bodily form but divine in spirit. He is said to be the "formless God with form". (45) He is also called "God-in-Expression". (46) This means that it is in the Satgurū that God has installed His own spirit. Accordingly it is through the Satgurū that God reveals Himself. Therefore on account of his divine essence, the Satgurū, even when in human form, is to be considered godly. Since the Satgurū is God's representative on earth the devotee is expected to accept and interiorize him just as he (the devotee) would God. The premiss underlying this belief is that a true spiritual understanding of the nature of the Satgurū is an understanding of the true being of God. (47)

We now come to the use of the term God incarnate. The term is not used here in the traditional Hindu sense of the avatār. In traditional Hinduism God (or gods) is endowed with both name and form (nāma-rūpa) as objects of devotion. Bābā Sawan Singh, on the other hand like his fellow Sants reject the cult of the form. Like them he sees the Name as the essential nature of the supreme Being. (48)

It is also important to note that Bābā Sawan Singh does not use the term God incarnate in the incarnationist sense of the Agra school. His is a neo-Sant interpretation of the term denoting a distinct human personality with divine attributes. (49)

The Concept of the Satgurū as Śabdgurū

The concept of Śabdgurū as it appears in the Gurmat Siddhānt is based on Gurū Nānak's idea of Gurbānī and Shiv Dayāl Singh's views on Surat Śabd Yoga.

Gurū Nānak's view of the identity of the Satgurū is not always a clear one. He uses the word Satgurū as he would Gurbānī. In both cases the meaning is the gurū's word or Śabd. In Sikh theology this might refer to God Himself. (50)

Bābā Sawan Singh seems to have adopted the Nānak-panthī interpretation of the term Gurbānī. What McLeod has to say about the Nānak-panthī

concept of Gurbānī may well apply to Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of Śabdgurū. He writes:

While it may be claimed that in Guru Nanak's teachings the word guru or the term gurbani (the guru's word, instruction or teaching) refers to God, it must be recognized that for his disciples, the words of Nanak, their guru and the word of God were virtually indistinguishable. (51)

As noted earlier Bābā Sawan Singh tends to equate Satgurū with the principle of divine self-expression. It appears that the idea being conveyed is similar to one that is also found in the Gorakhbānī. Here sabda is equated with Satgurū, who in turn is seen as Alakh or Nirāñjana, the supreme Being. (52) Like the Nāth-panthis, Bābā Sawan Singh celebrates the Satgurū as a manifestation of God. The practice here is to identify the Satgurū with the divine Śabd which is seen as participating in the all pervading nature of God. (53) In the following passage Bābā Sawan Singh spells this out:

The Shabd or divine Music is the perfect Master. The Shabd is indistinguishable from the Supreme Lord. It is a conscious current of that great power which created and which fully pervades it. All the universe emanated from it. (54)

The Satgurū is also not only absorbed in Śabd but is also the channel through which it flows. This is clearly an idea developed by Shiv Dayāl Singh in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. By presenting a passage from the Gurmāt Siddhānt together with that from the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī (Prose) we are able to see the similarities that exist in the manner in which the idea of Śabdgurū is thought of by both authors. In the Gurmāt Siddhānt we read:

Those in whom the Shabd Guru is manifest are indistinguishable from the Shabd. He alone is a Saint or perfect Master who can initiate others. The Shabd is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord, and it is revealed to the Saints or perfect Masters. They are indistinguishable from the Lord. (55)

The following passages from the Sār Bachan Rādhāsohmī (Prose) express Shiv Dayāl Singh's teachings as follows:

It is through the Shabd that the soul has descended into bondage, and so long as one does not meet a Sat Guru proficient in the mysteries of Shabd, he will not be able to return to his Real Home. (56)

Sat Guru is He who is absorbed in Shabd. This is the true test of the Sat Guru. (57)

However, in conveying this idea, it is not Shiv Dayāl Singh that Bābā Sawan Singh chooses to turn to but the Ādi Granth. All the references that he makes to the Ādi Granth confirm his belief that the Satgurū is Śabd and Śabd, the Satgurū. Below we reproduce one of the quotations he uses to deliver this message:

The Word is the Guru, the Guru is the Word;
In the Word is the nectar,
Which the Guru says we must accept.
The Guru manifests Himself and redeems His
disciples. (58)

There is also talk of the Satgurū being the "Shabd giver". This idea is linked to Bābā Sawan Singh's reaffirmation of a well-known Sant position. It involves the belief that the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga is meaningless without the Satgurū connecting the devotee with the

Śabd during initiation. (59) In the Gurmat Siddhānt we are told us that:

The perfect Master or Sat Guru is the true physician, for He has the life - giving herb of the Name or Shabd. The Sat Guru is the embodiment of Shabd, and it is that Shabd that takes the soul to its source. (60)

In Rādhāsoāmī literature one finds the idea of the Satgurū as the transmitter of Śabd recurring repeatedly. The statements quoted below are from Shiv Dayāl Singh:

Without a perfect Guru (Reality) doth not come into thy hands; and a perfect Guru is he who giveth thee Shabd. (61)

Without Sat Guru, nobody can get the secrets and details of the stages and the path. Sat Guru alone can make one know and understand them. (62)

In Nāth-panthī literature, śabda is elevated to the status of the only source of revelation. Gorakhnāth's followers see the śabda imparted by the Satgurū as a mystical illumination which renders all other scriptural evidence useless. (63) The Kabīr-panthīs too have been known to refer to the Satgurū as the Śabd giver within the context of Śabd Yoga. (64)

In summarizing, the following can be noted about the content of the term Śabdgurū as used in the Gurmat Siddhānt. The Satgurū is presented as the embodiment of Śabd. In the Śabdguru God Himself is thought to be present.

This is seen to be so since it is the Satguru who is the expression of God's eternal Word. The Śabdgurū also provides the devotee with spiritual insight. Contemplating the Śabdgurū means contemplating God's omnipotent agency and in this connection one cannot but help be reminded of the Śabdgurū of Sikh theology. (65)

The Concept of the Satgurū as Gurūdev

Bābā Sawan Singh uses the term Gurūdev (66) to mean the light of God. He does this with the same conviction as the Sikh Gurūs. His conception of the Gurūdev is that of the inner Satgurū who is merged with the light of God. What Taran Singh has to say about Gurū Nānak's idea of "the chosen man" can be applied to Bābā Sawan Singh's Satgurū. Taran Singh writes:

To be communicable the Supreme Being chooses one of his created men to be his vehicle and speak to humanity through that chosen vehicle in a language that man can understand. He places himself in the Guru, the specially chosen form he places himself as the "light" ("jot") in the chosen man. (67)

Though Bābā Sawan Singh talks of the Gurūdev as the inner Satgurū, the connection with the light of God of the Sikh Gurūs is quite clear. (68) Since the Satgurū of the Gurmat Siddhānt is "God-in-man", the light of God also shines as the light of the inner Satgurū. Bābā Sawan Singh speaks here of the "inner light form of the Satguru" :

The term Gurudev is used to refer to the inner light-form of the Satguru (Master). This form is free and

beyond the bondage of body and mind. (69)

The other meaning attached to the term Gurudev is that of the spiritual guide who accompanies the devotee across the various inner realms during meditation. (70) Bābā Sawan Singh's reference to this function of the Satgurū as inner Master is clearly articulated in the following passage:

The astral form of the Master appears in the forehead when the soul withdraws itself and gathers at the point behind the eyes. Unless this happens it is impossible to meet the Lord. The form of the Master, appears first and then the Lord. The form always remains with the disciple and takes him to the higher regions. (71)

It is the Satgurū, seen here as the connecting link between God and the disciple that is Gurudev. Bābā Sawan Singh points out that:

This light-form remains with the disciple in the eternal regions as well as in the regions of Brahma and unites him with Sat Purush (True Being). There is no difference between the Guru (Master), the Sat Guru (perfect Master), and the Lord. His real form, which has existed from the beginning and through - out many ages and is very bright, is called Gurudev. (72)

Finally, in order to drive home the point about the paramount importance of the Gurudev in the life of the disciple, Bābā Sawan Singh paraphrases a well-known verse of Gurū Arjan, (73) which in the Gurmat Siddhant reads as follows:

Gurudev is mother, Gurudev is father, Gurudev is the Lord and Parmeshwar (the Powerful One). The Gurudev gives happiness and is a true friend who never deserts us. He banishes ignorance. He

gives the gift of Nam. He is manifest in the age of peace and of true intelligence. He is the philosopher's stone. The Gurudev destroys all sins and is the redeemer of sinners. Holy is the spot where he sits; it is the true fountain of divine knowledge and immortality. One becomes pure by bathing in it. The Gurudev is from the beginning, and has been through the ages. One is redeemed by remembering the mantra of the Gurudev; his mantra is the Lord's mantra. O Lord! have mercy and lead us to a Gurudev. Take us sinners and fools, across. The Guru is Sat Guru and Parbrahm Parmeshwar. We bow before the Gurudev. (74)

Classification of Satgurūs

Babā Sawan Singh's classification of Satgurūs is a two-tiered one. His division of Satgurūs into types is supplemented by the distinction made between preordained Satgurūs and trained Satgurūs. The two criteria he uses to differentiate between the Sādhgurū, Satgurū, Sant Satgurū and Param Sant Satgurū are, the level of their spiritual advancement and their practical initiatory functions.

The Sādhgurū is defined in the Gurmat Siddhānt as:

a holy man who has risen above the region of Trikutī. This is the second region above the physical universe. He is one who has wiped away all the dirt covering the soul and has removed the covers of the three attributes or gunas, the five elements, twenty-five instincts, and the mind and Maya, all of which cover or hide the soul. (75)

The manner in which the term Sādhguru is defined here is best understood within the context of Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology, as explained in the preceding chapter of this study. Sādhgurū here is not to be confused with sādḥ or sādḥū, (76) the Hindu religious medicant or the scholar- realized preceptor of the Vedas. (77)

The Rādhāsoāmī understanding of the term Sādhgurū is to be seen as linked with the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga. The traditional Indian sādḥū is not considered to be of the same standing of the Rādhāsoāmī Sādhgurū. The underlying assumption here is that those who do not practice Surat Śabd Yoga or its equivalent do not transcend the causal plane and as such are unworthy of the title Sādhgurū. (78) This is the view put forward in Rādhāsoāmī writings (79) and confirmed by Bābā Sawan Singh.

Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of Satgurū reads as follows:

He who has realized the True Being
is a perfect Master or Guru. He has
transcended both the dissolution and
the grand dissolution. He has the power
to take others to the highest region. (80)

This definition appears to be based on an interpretation of a passage from the Adi Granth which reads:

No one equals the Servant of the Lord.
For, he the one is the highest of the high
He, whom the Lord Blesses with His Service
Nānak, that Servant is acclaimed all over. (81)

Bābā Sawan Singh translates "the highest of the high" to mean "Satgurū". His version of the passage quoted above reads as follows:

He who knows the True Being.
He is the Sat Guru.
His company brings release.
O Nanak, sing the praises of the Lord. (82)

Param Sants (or Satgurūs) are defined as great saints "who have reached the region of Anāmi and have become one with the Supreme Being". (83) Bābā Sawan Singh points out that there is "a great deal of difference" between a Sant (or Satgurū) and Param Sant (or Param Sant Satgurū). This difference however, is seen as being a technical one and is "for academic purposes only". (84) This is explained by way of a shift of emphasis from a criterion based on spiritual advancement to that of initiation functions. The following statement explains this:

If the Lord authorises one who has reached the Sadh gati (status of Sadh) or Sant gati (status of Sant) or Param Sant gati (status of Param Sant) to be a Guru, he is called a Sadhguru, Sant Guru or Param Sant Guru. (85)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt a distinction is made as earlier stated between preordained (born) Satgurūs and trained Satgurūs. We are dealing here with the neo-Sant (86) method of determining the status of the living Satgurū. Suprisingly Bābā Sawan Singh does not refer to the Sikh term "Swateh Sant" (87) when describing the preordained Satgurū. Instead he talks of "Sant Sat Gurus in their own right", i.e., "born Sants who come direct from the highest spiritual regions". (88) These Satgurūs do not require initiation from a living Master because "they always remain connected with the Lord". (89) He cites Kabīr and Gurū Nānak as examples of born Satgurūs. He also

argues that whenever such Satgurūs appear they start a "wave of spirituality and are succeeded by others who succeed them and continue their teachings". (90)

Bābā Sawan Singh then makes the historically problematic claim that even though both Kabīr and Gurū Nānak were born Satgurūs they did have living gurūs, (91) if for "cosmetic" purposes only. He explains that in order not to break with yogic tradition Kabīr and Gurū Nānak took on living gurūs and were initiated. (92)

He then introduces the next category of Satgurūs who are not preordained but who have attained God-realization by practising Surat Śabd Yoga with a competent Satgurū. He explains that in real terms however, there is no difference between preordained and trained Satgurūs. Both are said to have "full spiritual powers" and explains that:

The first kind of Saint gets an order from the Supreme Lord to go forth as a Guru, and then He takes birth, while the second kind receives the order to act as a Guru after he has been born. (93)

The distinction made between preordained and trained Satgurūs is not unique to Bābā Sawan Singh though the terminology used is unique to the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. In the Hindu tradition there exists a somewhat similar scheme. We are referring here to the distinction made between Kalpita gurū and Akalpita gurū. The former is one who has to serve another gurū and undergo initiation before carrying out any of his own. The latter is seen as being endowed with supernatural powers

from birth and does not depend on initiation or the grace of another gurū. (94)

As an appendage to the above discussion Bābā Sawan Singh warns of so-called pseudo Masters. The pseudo guru is "inefficient" and even "ignorant of himself". (95) They are said to be neither preordained nor trained Satgurūs and are merely imposters. (96) These so-called gurūs are "full of the poison of Maya", (97) are spiritually blind, i.e. not imbued with Śabd (98) and as such cannot lead the devotee to salvation. (99)

Characteristics of the Satgurū

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the Satgurū is hailed as the "perfect man". Of the "perfect man", Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say:

A perfect man is the fulfillment
of spiritual evolution in human beings.
It is impossible to praise him adequately.
He is possessor of all virtues and is the
fountain head of spirituality. Whatever
there is in the universe, is within him. (100)

The grandeur of the Satgurū is considered infinite. In typical Sant fashion, the Satgurū is placed on a pedestal and described in superlative terms. Bābā Sawan Singh's description of the Satgurū as the "perfect man" is essentially the one highlighted in Sikhism. (101) Bābā Sawan Singh's elaboration of the qualities of the Satgurū is an elaboration of the qualities usually reserved for God. (102)

They could be summarized as follows. The Satgurū is beyond comprehension. (103) He is immortal in that he is above dissolution and grand dissolution. (104) He is above the three bodies, (105) unerring, (106) the Lord of amrit. (107) He charges no fees (108), dresses in no particular fashion, (109) and does not perform miracles (110) The Satgurū is also physically perfect (111) In short, he is the "radiant sun of purity, universal wisdom, truth and spirituality". (112)

Bābā Sawan Singh relies almost exclusively on the Adi Granth when enumerating the qualities of the Satgurū. However, the manner in which this is done bears a striking similarity to the way the Satgurū is glorified in the Kulārvana Tantra. (113) It could be construed that this striking resemblance in style and content is more than just a mere coincidence. It might be an indication of the influence that Tantric literature has on Rādhāsoāmī writings.

The Concept of the living Satgurū

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the necessity of a living Satgurū (Gurūavatār) is very clearly expressed. It is almost certainly linked to the Beas view that the Satgurū is an office always filled by a person with a distinct personality of his own. This is in complete contrast to the incarnationist view voiced at Agra. At Agra the Satgurū is perceived as a manifestation of a unique personality. Bābā Sawan Singh's

definition of Gurūavatār, which clearly reflects the Beas view, is given below:

The real benefit of spirituality, however, can only be had from the Guru of the time or the living Guru. The Guru who initiates a person is his present Guru or the Guru of the time. Even if there be more than one Guru at one and the same time, a disciple should have one Guru only. (114)

The Shabd must take form. Perfect Masters are incarnations of the Supreme Being, the Timeless One. They are called Guru - avatars or Masters incarnate. (115)

Two significant features emerge from the above quoted passages. The first acknowledges that there can be more than one living Satgurū at any one time. This has very important and far reaching implications for Rādhāsoāmī tradition as a whole. It has fuelled many controversies in the past. The controversy is centred on the question "which initiating Satgurū is to be considered the genuine Satgurū of the time. (116)

The other point worth noting is the fact that Bābā Sawan Singh uses Gurūavatār to mean the living Satgurū or "Master incarnate". It is important to note here that though he borrows the term "Master incarnate" from his Agra counterparts he does not attach any internationalist connotations to the term. The Gurūavatār is not an incarnation of the previous Satgurū as in the Agra Nij-Ansh theory. (117) He uses the term to mean the distinct personality said to be the living human pole of God; he is furthermore not the direct incarnation of the deity in the traditional Hindu sense.

In rejecting the Agra claims about the status and role of the Purātangurū (past Master), Bābā Sawan Singh puts forward this common sense argument:

A patient cannot take the medicine from past physicians. No one can marry a dead person and beget children of him. Similarly, perfect Mahatmas came in their own time and redeemed those who came in contact with them then. After the expiration of their period they left the world and merged in the Lord. Before departing, they passed on their work to others. (118)

In doing so he overtly rejects the belief propagated at Agra that the Avatārgurū is but an incarnation of the departed Satgurū (Purātangurū). In order to reinforce this rejection he once again stresses the absolute necessity of the living Satgurū:

Every prophet of God emphasizes the necessity of seeking the Master of the time. He who has not, after due deliberation, searched for the Master of his time, who is the Regent and Viceroy of God and is a perfect Guru, will remain lacking of true spirituality. (119)

The notion that the disciple must have a living Satgurū in order to achieve God-realization is a problematic one. It is problematic in so far as it obscures the question of the Ādigurū or primordial gurū. We are referring here to the notion that at some point in time the first guru of a tradition must have been without a human gurū. The fact, for example, that none of the Sants whose names appear in the Ādi Granth ever mentioned their gurū, lends credence to the claims put forward by scholars like Vaudeville and McLeod, who contend that Kabīr and Gurū Nānak were probably Ādigurūs without a human gurū.

Vaudeville, for example, questions the Kabīr-panthī claim, supported in Rādhāsoāmī circles (120) that Kabīr had a human gurū in Rāmānand. (121) McLeod in turn argues that there is no historical evidence to support the traditional belief that Kabīr was Gurū Nānak's gurū. (122)

The insistence on the absolute necessity of the living Gurūavatār is also indicative of Bābā Sawan Singh's position regarding the role of scriptures. He makes two statements. The first of these confirms his belief that scriptures are no substitute for the Gurūavatār. The other is a clear rejection of the orthodox Sikh belief that the Adi Granth is the true gurū. His views on these subjects come to light in the following passages:

Many people say that we can light the lamp of knowledge, by merely reading religious books. They say that we need no Guru and that the books will serve the purpose of the Guru. Books cannot activate the spiritual life within us. We can obtain this spiritual life only from some spiritually-realized soul. Only a burning lamp can light another lamp. It is impossible to get life from inert matter. Similarly, spiritual knowledge cannot be attained by the mere reading of religious books, even if for millions of years. (123)

Referring specifically to the Adi Granth, he notes:

Some persons think that the teaching in the Adi Granth about the necessity of a living Master held good during the life-time of the Sikh Gurus only. The advice of the perfect Masters or Saints is for the entire world and for all times, and not for a specific period. (124)

The above statement clearly indicates that Bābā Sawan Singh does not subscribe to the orthodox Sikh view about the nature of gurūship. He does not accept that the gurūship was abolished after the death of Gurū Gobind Singh. He also rejects the belief that the gurūship bestowed upon the Ādi Granth after Gurū Gobind Singh's death. (125) Like the Nāmdharī and Nirāṅkāri Sikhs, he contends that Gurū Gobind Singh did not die at Nander. Like them he believes that the Gurū disappeared from the scene and reappeared later to appoint his successor. However, though there is a consensus of opinion among the Nāmdharīs, Nirāṅkāris and the Rādhāsoāmīs regarding Gurū Gobind Singh's death, they disagree on who his successor actually was. (126)

Bābā Sawan Singh also furnishes us with a number of explanations as to why Gurūavatārs appear from time to time. He links his explanations directly to the legend of Kabīr's four incarnations (127). He also refers briefly to the hagiographical Janam Sakhīs:

In the "Anurag Sagar", Kabir has stated that he was born in all Four Ages to preach Nam (the Divine Sound). (128)

It is mentioned in the Janam Sakhi of Bhai Bala that Guru Nanak said that in the Kalyug (Iron Age), the Saints have to redeem people by taking a number of incarnations. (129)

His main contention; however, is that living Satgurūs present themselves for the benefit and salvation of earnest seekers. They come, it is said "to mend broken souls" and to prepare the disciple for the journey "back to the court of the Lord". (130) In the Gurmat Siddhant their appearance is also conceived as being an act of mercy:

When our soul grows weary in its
search for the Lord, and is anxious
to return to its home, when our eyes
long to see the Lord and we hunger for
Him, then, in order to fulfill our
intense desire, He incarnates as a perfect
Master or Sat Guru. (131)

The Gurus come to the world for our own
good. They leave their bliss and come to
the land of death in order to emancipate
souls engulfed in the darkness of Maya and
the snares of Kal, and take them back. They
assume human bodies and move about in the
world the same way we do. (132)

Here again the similarity between these statements and those attributed to Shiv Dayāl Singh is telling. In the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh explains the coming of the Gurūavatār in the following manner:

Observing this sorry state of affairs of
present times, Sants were moved to pity. Although
there were few real seekers and spiritually
minded, yet out of sheer grace and mercy,
they gave out the secrets of the highest
regions, through discourses and writings. (133)

The Benefits of having a living Satgurū

We now turn our attention to what Bābā Sawan Singh has to say about the benefits to be derived from having a living Satgurū. He tends to equate them with the achievement of the ultimate state of being:

The Gurus describe many benefits that result from acting upon the words of the Master. One praises the Lord. He becomes dyed in His color. His tongue tastes the nectar. All of his actions prove successful. He gets the possession of the nine treasures. Diseases and fevers are banished. One's desires are fulfilled. The mind becomes still. Egotism is destroyed. Pain and pleasure appear to be the same. Harmful cravings and desires are banished. Sins are gotten rid of and sinners are redeemed. The poison of Maya leaves us. One becomes indifferent as to where one is in the home or outside. The snare of death is destroyed and death does not come near. One does not go to hell. Birth and death cease. Great contentment is experienced. One is connected with the Name and his devotion proves fruitful. On realising the Lord, the seeker and the Lord become one. (134)

What emerges from this quotation is one of the central themes of the Gurmat Siddhānt; that without the Gurūavatār all is lost. Bābā Sawan Singh's emphasis is undoubtedly on the absolute supremacy of the living Satgurū as the disciple's salvation. We are here reminded of a collection of verses in the Ādi Granth. These verses are attributed Kabīr :

If the house stays not without the beams,
Then, how can one be Ferried across without
the Lord's Name ?
Without the pitcher , the water is held not,
So does one come to Grief, without the Grace
of Saints.

As without the farmer, the land is ploughed not,
As without the thread, no one can string the
beads

As one can not tie up the knot without twisting
the thread,
So does one come to Grief, without the Grace of
the Saints.

As without father and mother, there can be no
suffering,
As without water, one can wash not one's soiled
clothes,
As without the horse, no one can ride to one's
end,
So does one find not the (Lord's) Court with -
out the Grace of Saints.

As without music, there is no dance,
So rejected by the Eternal Spouse,
one is cursed.
Says Kabir: "Own only thy One Lord",
And then, by the Guru's Grace, thou
diest not again. (135)

In Bābā Sawan Singh's view it is the living Satgurū who aids the
disciple in disciplining his mind and controlling his desires. (136)
This paves the way for the possibility of mystical withdrawal. It is
during this process that the ego is tamed (137) and karmic debts are
reduced (138). The devotee then gains release from the cycle of
birth and rebirth. (139)

The Disadvantages of not having a living Satgurū

Bābā Sawan Singh's views on the disadvantages of being without a
Gurūavatār are reflected below:

There are a number of disadvantages of being without a true Master. One remains drowned in Maya and his many wordly desires. He suffers from lust, attachment and pride and does not make progress toward his destination. His egotism is not destroyed and the mind is not stilled. Without the Master all is dark; one sees nothing inside and can make no spiritual progress. (140)

In short, we are led to believe that there can be no release from suffering without the guidance of the living Satgurū. (141) One remains imprisoned in body consciousness, (142) and human life is therefore wasted. (143) Here we see a Sant dictum being repeated. The Sants teach that the only true life is the life of the spirit. They also proclaim that the true purpose of human existence lies in being able to meet a Gurūavatārand to submit to his will.

Summary

We commenced our discussion with a characterization of Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of Satgurū and the terms related to it. We then highlighted the manner in which he chose to attach specific spiritual connotations to the term. We pointed out that in the Gurmat Siddhant the Satgurū was taken to be the human embodiment of God- the expression of the divine principle of truth.

In discussing the concept of Sabdgurū, we drew the reader's attention to Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of the Satgurū as the transmitter of

Sabd. We also attempted to explain how this idea could be related to the Sikh concept of Gurbānī.

We proposed that the term Gurūdev as used in the Gurmat Siddhānt obtained its meaning from the idea of Satgurū as the inner light of God, an idea clearly expressed in the Sikh scriptures.

We demonstrated how Bābā Sawan Singh differentiated between born Satgurūs and trained Satgurūs in the context of Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology. We also commented on the implications such a classification has on the study of gurū lineages within the Rādhāsoāmī tradition.

In summarizing Bābā Sawan Singh's enumeration of the qualities of the Satgurū, we demonstrated how a picture of the "perfect man" was painted and noted a similar trend in Tāntric literature.

We then examined Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of Gurūavatār. We studied the question of the indispensibility of the living Satgurū and explained what this meant in neo-Sant terms.

Finally, we saw how in the Gurmat Siddhānt the benefits of having a living Satgurū were seen as far outweighing the disadvantages of not having one. The emphasis here was on the salvatory functions the Satgurū was seen to perform.

NOTES

1. J. Gonda's, Change And Continuity In Indian Religion (London, 1965) remains the standard etymological study of the term gurū in the Hindu tradition. See pp. 229-284. However, it is to Steinmann that one must turn to for a very detailed study of the semantic development of the term in the Hindu tradition. See R. M. Steinmann, Gurū-Sisya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis in Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus (Stuttgart, 1986), pp. 73-76.
2. Bhāi Mani Singh for example, explains that in Sikh theology, "gu" means darkness and "rū" means light. Thus the gurū is one who "dispells darkness" by "turning on the light". See B. H. Lal, "Akath Katha-The Sikh Theology", in The Sikh Courier International 27 (1987), p. 2. This definition has received mention by a number of other scholars. M. Dhavamony, "The Guru in Hinduism", in Studia Missionalia 36 (1987), p. 157, discusses it in the context of the Advaya Taraka Upaniṣad. For a more general treatment, see B. B. Chaubey, "The Nature of Guruship According to the Hindu Scriptures", in C. O. McMullen, (ed.), The Nature of Guruship (Batala, 1976), p. 9.
3. He writes:

The term guru-in itself is an illustration of the widespread belief that mighty, divine or holy persons are held to be characterized by an uncommon weight.

(Change And Continuity In Indian Religion, p. 237).
- He suggests that "heavy" here implies the idea of extraordinary power and influence.
4. J. D. Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu Tradition", in Numen XXIX (1982), p. 34.
5. This idea probably has its roots in the Atharva Veda (XI.5.3) and the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI.5.4) which speaks of bringing the sisya into a "new birth", whereby he becomes the "twice born" (dīva). See R. K. Joshi, "Notes on Guru, Dīkṣā and Mantra", in: Ethos 37 (1982), pp. 106-108. Refer also to Gonda, Change And Continuity In Indian Religion, pp. 395-459 and Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu Tradition", p. 37.
6. See Vaudeville, Kabir Vol I p. 136 and Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, pp. 87-88 and 355-356. Both authors emphasize the centrality of the deified Satgurū in the Tantric gurūvāda doctrine. Vaudeville talks of "gurū worship" whilst Das Gupta prefers to speak of Tantric "gurūism". The deified status of the Sadgurū in Tantrism has also been carefully studied by Steinmann. He highlights the importance of the Sadgurū in Tantrism by referring to "the gurū

institution". See Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 99-100.

7. In the Kulārvana Tantra (X. 13) this is clearly expressed:

The form of the guru is the root of dhyana,
the lotus feet of the guru is the root of
puja, the word of the guru is the root of
the mantra, and the grace of the guru is
the root of siddhi (supernatural powers).

(Quoted from Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu Tradition",
p. 45).

8. In an interesting commentary on the Kulārvana Tantra (X. 13), M. P. Pandit illustrates the Tāntric tendency of gurū glorification:

The Guru is the mother who carries the seeker
in the womb of his consciousness, he gives him
birth into the life of the Spirit. The Guru
is the father who tends to the growth and wel-
fare of the initiate in the difficult Path.
The Guru embodies the Lord for it is through
the person of the Guru that he manifests Him -
self to the disciple and reaches to him His
saving Grace.

(Gems from the Tantras [Madras, 1969], p. 29).

See also Kulārvana Tantra (XII. 35, XIII. 53, 54, 57-58 and 62-63).

9. Nimbārka speaks of five paths to salvation. These are karma, jñāna, upāsana, prapatti and gurūpasatti (devotion to the gurū). See Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu Tradition", p. 47 for notes on the five paths.

10. In elaborating on the tri-dimensional oneness of himself, his gurū and God, Jñānesvar rhetorically asks who then is one to worship. He says:

God, His devotee, and the Guru are united
together, as three rivers merge into a
confluence; when everything becomes God,
how is one to worship Him?

(Quoted from K. B. Gajendragadkar, "The
Maharashtra Saints and Their Teachings",
in H. Bhattacharya, [ed], The Cultural Heritage
of India Vol IV [Calcutta, 1956], p. 375).

11. In the Jñānesvarī (XIII. 385-90,) it is written:

When the sun of illumination has arisen, he (the devotee) fills the basket of his intellect with the innumerable flowers of emotion, and worships the Guru with them...he burns the incense of his egoism and waves lights of illumination before his Guru. In short, he makes himself the worshipper, and his Guru the object of worship.

(Quoted from Mlecko, "The Guru in Hindu Tradition, p. 49).

12. See for example, Dasabodha (V.1, 19-43). For an analysis of the manner in which Rāmdāsa deifies the Satgurū in the Dasabodha (V.3, 40-46) see R. D. Ranade, Pathway to God in Hindu Literature (Bombay, 1970), p. 126.

13. Within Virasaivism, astravarana signifies the eight shieths which put the devotee in tune with the Infinite, thus leading him to beatitude.

14. See S. C. Nandimath, A Handbook of Virasaivism (Bangalore, 1978), p. 54.

15. S. Spencer, Mysticism in World Religion (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 50.

16. Gold's observation on this subject is an instructive one. He notes:

The Sant in his esoteric aspect as a holy man should be differentiated both from the priest in Brahmanic tradition and from the officiant in most Hindu sampradāys. Unlike these figures who normally manipulate the power of a divine being through some sort of ritual channel, the living Sant as esoteric guru standing outside traditions - delivers grace and power directly through his own person.

(Gold, "Clan and Lineage among the Sants: Seed, Service, Substance", p. 310).

17. See chapter I of this study.

18. This problem has already been adequately discussed elsewhere. See for example, Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and the Universals of Religious Perception, pp. 106-109.

19. See McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, p. 44.
20. See for example, Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 133 and S.D. Maheshwari, (trns.), Discourses of Maharaj Sahib (Agra, 1978), p. 360 for expressions of such a view.
21. This idea has been the subject of careful research by Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and the Universals of Religious Perception, pp. 150-169.
22. Translated as Ghat Rāmāyana Vol I p. 59 by Gold, "Clan And Lineage Among The Sants : Seed Service and Substance", pp. 315-316.
23. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 76. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the following synonyms are used for Sant Satgurū and Satgurū. These are, Master Saint, True Master and Perfect Master. In a stricter sense, however, Bābā Sawan Singh talks of the Sant Satgurū as the true gurū who descends from the spiritual realm of Sach Khand. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 75. It is interesting also to note that Satgurū is used in the same manner as Gurū saint in the Adi Granth. (See Rāmkalī M 1 Siddha Goshtī-1).
24. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 76.
25. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 75.
26. See Mlecko, "The Guru In Hindu Tradition", p. 34 for notes on the Vedic use of the term ācārya.
27. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 74. However, given the context here it would be safe to assume that the reference is to the ācārya of the Vedas.
28. See for example, Visnu Dharma Śāstra (XXXII. 1-2) or Śāstra of Manu (II. 227-37).
29. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 74.
30. See p. 1 of this chapter.
31. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 68.
32. Kirpal Singh, one of the leading Satgurūs of the Beas line and one of Bābā Sawan Singh's leading disciples offers this interpretation:

...thus he who always hears this call within himself, and is devotedly attached to the call and can make it manifest in others, is described...as Guru.

(Godman, [New Delhi, date not given], p. 10).

33. Maru Solhās, (7-8) p 1075 reads: "The Guru's Word Pervades everything, all over. (The Guru) himself Hears (its subtle Melody) and then utters it he".

34. See chapter II, of this study.

35. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv. The Satgurū-truth equation is basically that of Tāntrism as research by Vaudeville has shown. See Vaudeville, Kabīr Vol I p. 136.

36. See Rāmkali M 1 Siddha Goshti, (39) Ādi Granth p. 942. The phrase used by here by Gurū Nānak for body is "store-house of God".

37. The term "interior religion" is usually associated with Vaudeville. It forms part of the title of one of her earlier articles. See "Kabīr and Interior Religion", pp. 191-200.

38. For a summarized version of this Sant philosophy, see Juergensmeyer, "The Radhasoami Revival of The Sant Tradition", pp. 339-390.

39. Some scholars that have researched Kabīr's concept of interior religion are Vaudeville, Kabīr Vol 1, and H. Dvivedi, Kabīr (New Delhi. 1973). We shall return to this concept within the context of Surat Sabd Yoga, in the next chapter.

40. Commenting on the Sants' rejection of religious externalism, Juergensmeyer notes that:

Rituals, sacrifices, chants and festivals -
all these are dashed upon the dungheap of
of spiritual devices.... The Sant message
to Brahmanical theism is a call for a
radical, uncompromising submission to
faith. The externals are irrelevant. Only
the interior transformation of the soul
matters.

(The Radhasoami Revival of the Sant Tradition",
p. 339).

41. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 94.

42. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 63.

43. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 63.

44.

The oneness of the Master means that his
essence is merged in the essence of the
Lord, and they are one.

(Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 173).

This theme repeatedly occurs in the Ādi Granth. Bābā Sawan Singh's main source of reference. In Āsa Kāfi M 1, (18) Ādi Granth p. 421 we read of a "Guru- God". In Sri Rāg M 5, (1) Ādi Granth p. 52 the devotee is exhorted to "worship thy God, thy Guru".

45. This phrase stems from Kirpal Singh, Godman, p. 96. The idea that the Satgurū is God in human form stems probably from the belief in the Kulārvana Tantra (XIII.51-54) that since God cannot be seen by the human eye He has to take a human form. This view is voiced by Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis in Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, p. 237.

46. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol V p. 165.

47. Bābā Sawan Singh could have had this verse from the Sar Bachan Rādhāsoamī (Poetry) in mind when formulating his thoughts: "The secret of devotion thou hast not known; for thou hast not taken Guru as Sat Purush". (Translated as Bachan 18 Shabd 1, in Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 93).

The verse above in turn, appears to reflect Rāg Rāmkali M 5, (1) Ādi Granth p. 895 which reads:

Thou art our Protector Lord, Compassionate
and Kind,
And Whosoever Dwells on Thee, even for a moment,
is Emancipated.
Every one Contemplates Thee, O God,
But Thou art Met with through the Mantra
of the Guru
My God Gives to all life.
For, He is the God of gods, our Perfect
Master, and Permeates all hearts.

48. See chapter II of this study.

49. These two opposing views of the Agra and Beas schools have already been discussed in Chapter 1 of this study.

50. This should not be taken to mean that Gurū Nānak is not known to have made explicit statements about the identity of the Satgurū. The following passage is just one instance where his teachings on the subject is expressed clearly:

The Guru is God, Unfathomable and
Mysterious: yea, through the Guru's
Service, one knows the mysteries of the
three worlds.

Yea, the beneficent Guru himself Blesses and
one Attains to the Unfathomable and Mysterious
God.

(Rāg Bhairō M 1, [1-2] Ādi Granth p. 1125).

51. McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism p. 44.
52. See Vaudeville, Kabīr Vol 1 p. 138.
53. Commenting on the idea of Śabdgurū in Nāthism, Vaudeville observes:

The conception of the Satguru as being identical with the all-pervading, supreme Reality, expressing itself in a mystical "Word" within the hearts of men appears to be central in Nāthism.

(Kabīr Vol 1 p. 139).

54. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 66. Bābā Sawan Singh, however, does not go so far as to explicitly proclaim the Satgurū to be the creator by virtue of his being the embodiment of Śabd. In Sikh theology for instance, such an identification exists. In Sri Rāg M 5, (221-222) Ādi Granth p. 52 we read:

Incomprehensible, Immaculate and Pure
is He; no one can equal the Guru.
He is the Creator and the Cause;
through Him is all Glory.
Without the Guru, there is none; and
all that happens is in His Will.

55. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 67.
56. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (107), p. 98.
57. Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoamī Part II (Poetry), Bachan 13 Shabd 4 (10), p. 270.
58. Quoted as M 4 Nat 982-11 in Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 66. See also Sorath M 1 (7) Ādi Granth p. 635.
59. Surat Śabd Yoga initiation will be explained in the next chapter.
60. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 69. See also p. 72 of the same volume.
61. Translated as Bachan 24 Shabd 1 in Puri, Radhasoami Teachings, p. 79.

62. Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoṇī Part II (Poetry), Bachan 26 Answer 4 (172), p. 111.

63. Vaudeville's translation of Gorakhbānī (4) makes this clear:

Neither Veda nor Coran, nor abundance
of words: all fell to the bottom

At the summit of the sky (gagana), the
sabda is shining: there the knower (vijñānī)
discovers the Invisible Being (alakha).

(Kabir Vol. I p. 137).

64. Sethi's translation of the following passage from Kabir ki Sabdāvalī, (p. 1.8) is self-explanatory:

Know that Master is the Lord,
Be engrossed in the Shabd he gives;
Bow to the Master, adore him;
Contemplate on him without a break."

(Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 648).

65. A careful study of Lal's analysis of Gurū Gobind Singh's Rehat Nāma will reveal some startling similarities between the Gurū's concept of Gurūsabd and that of Bābā Sawan Singh. See "Akath - Katha. The Sikh Theology", pp. 2-4.

66. Steinmann explains that the word gurudev is Hindi for "gurū-God". See Gurū-Siṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 90-91.

67. T. Singh, "The Nature of Guruship in the Guru Granth", in McMullen The Nature Of Guruship, pp. 27-28. This view is shared by S.S. Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 90-91. He, however, prefers to use the term "Guru soul" instead of, "chosen man" when referring to what is known as "Gurudev" in the Gurmat Siddhant.

68. The verse from the Adi Granth that Bābā Sawan Singh refers to here is given as Rag Bilawal 802-11:

The Guru is our Light and our Lord;
His very sight is beneficial,
For he is the perfection of all virtues.

(Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 146).

69. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 145.

70. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V pp. 146-152.

71. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 35.
72. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 145. See also p. 146 of the same volume.
73. The verse in question is Gauri Bāwan Akhari M 5 (1) Ādi Granth p. 250 which reads:

The Guru is the Mother, the Father, the
 God of gods, the Master:
 The Guru is the Mate, the Destroyer of
 Ignorance, the Kinsman, the Brother.
 The Guru is Beneficent who Blesses
 us with the Lord's Name; by His
 Mantram is the mind held.
 The Guru is the embodiment of Peace,
 Truth, Wisdom, the philosopher's stone,
 whose touch turns all into gold, and
 more.
 The Guru is the Place of pilgrimage,
 the pool of Nectar, Bathing in which
 brings infinite Wisdom.
 The Guru is the Creator, the Destroyer
 of all Sins, Purifying all Sinners.
 The Guru is from the beginning of Time,
 through ages upon ages, Dwelling on
 whose Mantram one is Saved.
 The Lord Blesses us with the Society
 of the Guru that we, the Ignorant
 Sinners, are also Saved.
 The Guru is the Transcendent Lord,
 the Inner - knower, yea, the Spouse
 who Stays for ever.

74. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 151. Bābā Sawan Singh gives the verse as
 M 5 Gauri bawan Akhari 250-1.
75. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 75.
76. The term sādhu is not used by Bābā Sawan Singh in the
 conventional sense of religious mendicant who also responds to the
 name munishwar sannyāsī or yogīshwar.
77. See Joshi, "Notes on Guru, Dīkṣā and Mantra", p. 104 for a
 definition of the term sadhu in the Vedās.
78. Shiv Dayāl Singh defines "Sadh" as:

A Sadh is he who has faith and
 belief in Sant Mat and performs
 Surat Shabd Yoga and getting
 across Trikutī, baths in the

Trivenī and Mansarovar reservoir
in Sunn. Without attaining this
position and status, one cannot
be called a "Sadh".

(Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsōāmī Part II
[Poetry] Bachan 26 Answer 5 [Part III] (188-
190), p. 113).

79. See Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsōāmī Part I (Poetry) Preface
(15), p. 24. See also Sār Bachan Rādhāsōāmī Part II (Poetry) Bachan
26 Shabd 5 (177-186), pp. 112-113.

80. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 74. See also p. 120 of the same volume.

81. Gauri Bāwan Akhari M 5 (34) Ashtapadi, p. 286.

82. Quoted as M 5 Gauri 286-12 in Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 74.

83. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 75.

84. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. 75-76.

85. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 76.

86. See chapter I, of this study for a discussion of the neo-Sant
position of the Beas school.

87. See chapter I, of this study for a definition of this title.

88. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 76.

89. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 76.

90. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 76.

91. The problem of the historical gurū in the Sant and Rādhāsōāmī
traditions has already been analysed in Gold, The Lord as Guru in the
North Indian Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and Universals of
Religious Perception, pp. 80-81 and 104-107.

92. In chapter I of this study we outlined this belief at Beas and
how it caused a split with the Agra group. For an analysis of the Agra
view of this question, see Gold, The Lord as Guru in the North Indian
Tradition. The Hindu Saint Tradition and the Universals of Religious
Perception, p. 110.

R. Perkins writing from the Beas perspective reiterates the belief
held at Beas about Kabīr's and Gurū Nānak's Satgurūs:

The Anurāg Sāgar maintains and Sant Mat
tradition affirms, that Kabir is the
proto Master or original Saint, who
has descended directly from God.

Nevertheless, tradition affirms, and Kabir's writings bear it out that Kabir took initiation from a Guru, and the Guru was Ramananda. This may seem contradictory; but it is a basic pillar of Sant Mat that every one has to sit, at the feet of a Master.

(A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir [Preface], p. xx).

93. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 77.

94. See Joshi, "Notes on Guru, Dīkṣā and Mantra", p. 104 for information on the concepts of Kalpita gurū and Akalpita gurū.

95. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 215.

96. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 77.

97. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 219.

98. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 223. Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say about the pseudo gurū without the gift of Nām:

Just as a spoon, even when smeared with pudding, remains unaware of the taste of the pudding, similarly these gurus who are not imbued with Nām and have not tasted it, are of little use.

(Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 222).

He seems to have been inspired by the following passage from the Ādi Granth:

The spoon craves the food, but know not the task itself:
I seek to see those who are imbued with the Lord's Essence. "

(Rāg Gujri, Shaloka M 5, [1] p. 521).

99. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 217. Bābā Sawan Singh seems to have been inspired by the Kulārvana Tantra (p. 533) which reads:

Many are the Gurus like the lamps in house
but rare is the Guru who lights up all like sun.
He is the Guru by whose contact there flows the Supreme Ananda. The intelligent man

should choose such a one as Guru and no other.

(Translation by T. Vidyaratnam and Woodroffe, J. G., (eds.). Kulāravana Tantra (New Delhi, 1975)).

100. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol V p. 115. Refer also to pp. 116-117 and 126-127 of the same volume.

101. This idea as it appears in the Adi Granth has been discussed by T. Singh, Sikhism. Its Ideals and Institutions (Amritsa, 1978) pp. 18-19. Unfortunately he confines his discussion to the narrow confines of the Khālsā. No attempt is made to explain the broader implications the idea has for Sikhism in general.

102. Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas about the divine attributes of God have already been discussed. See chapter I of this study.

103. There is talk here of the Satgurū being "beyond the reach of thought, imagination inferences, guess, theory and reasoning". (Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 64).

104. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 74. The concepts of dissolution and grand dissolution have already been discussed in the previous chapter. See the sections on the astral and causal planes.

105. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 62. The "three bodies" here refer to the physical, astral and causal planes.

106. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 134. Here the faultlessness of God is equated to that of the Satgurū.

107. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 135. Here Bābā Sawan Singh is probably thinking of the Sikh term Amrit Dev (Lord of Amrit). See Āsā M 4, (16) Adi Granth p. 449. He also speaks of the Satgurū being the "jeweller of Nam". This phrase seems to have been borrowed from Shalok M 3, (2) Adi Granth p. 145. Here Gurū Nānak is called the "jeweller of the Lord's Name".

108. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 154. Rādhāsoāmī Satgurūs do not accept payment for spiritual services rendered.

109. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 155. Bābā Sawan Singh reiterates the Sant belief that outward appearance has little to do with spirituality. We are reminded here of Gurū Nānak's critique of the Nāth yogī's preoccupation with garb (Rāmkalī M 1 Siddha Goshtī, (8-9) Adi Granth p. 939). See W.O. Cole, "Guru Nanak and the Gorakhnaths", in Religion 16 (1980), p. 185.

110. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 155. In Beas circles there is talk of the hidden miracle of the Satgurū's grace. Visible miracles are considered irrelevant.

111. See Gurnat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 156. There is talk of the Satgurū having "lion's eyes" and "a lotus on the sole of his foot." His gait is skinned to that of a chakor (moon bird).

112. Gurnat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 155.

113. For a lengthy enumeration of the qualities of the Satgurū in the Kulārvana Tantra (XIII.83), see B.B. Chaubey, "The Nature of Guruship according to the Hindu Scriptures", in McMullen, The Nature Of Guruship, pp. 116-118.

114. Gurnat Siddhānt Vol V p. 80. This passage should be read in conjunction with the following passage:

A disciple should have one Master only
The disciple should continue to con -
template on the form of the Master
who initiated him even after the
latter leaves the world.

(Gurnat Siddhānt Vol V p. 79).

See also pp 81, 90 and 120 of the same volume.

The neo-Sant view of the living Satgurū has already been discussed in relation to the Beas interpretation of verse 250 of the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Prose). See chapter I of this study.

115. Gurnat Siddhānt Vol. V p 82. See also p. 90 of the same volume.

116. The question of the identity of the true Satgurū is a complex controversial one. It is best discussed within the context of successorship disputes within the Rādhāsoāmī movement. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study. Lane's, The Death of Kirpal Singh. The Politics of Guru Successorship is a valuable contribution to the study of this subject.

117. See chapter 1, pp. 9 and 16 of this study.

118. Gurnat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 84. See also pp. 85 and 102 of this volume.

119. Gurnat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 80. See also Vol IV pp. 96-97.

120. See note 89 of this chapter.

121. See. Vaudeville, Kabir Vol. I p. 114. Refer also to D.N. Lorenzen, "The Kabir Panth: heretics to hindus", in Lorenzen, Religious Change and Cultural Domination, pp. 158-159.

122. See McLeod, Gurū Nānak And The Sikh Religion, p. 157.

123. Gurnat Siddhant Vol V p. 110. See also pp. 26 and 88 of the same volume. The heading on p 109 reads: "GRANTHS AND SCRIPTURES AND LEARNED MEN CANNOT TAKE THE PLACE OF GURUS".
124. Gurnat Siddhant Vol V p. 81.
125. The orthodox view is explored in G.S. Talib, "The Concept Of Guruship in the Sikh Tradition", in McMullen, The Nature of Guruship, p. 109.
126. For an account of the life of Gurū Gobind Singh in Nādhari hagiography, see S.S. Sanehi, "Nature of Guruship According To Nādhari Tradition", in McMullen, The Nature Of Guruship, pp. 110-116. The Nirankārī version is presented by M.S. Nirankari, "The Nature of Guruship According to the Nirankari Sikh Tradition", in McMullen, The Nature Of Guruship, pp. 117-122. The Rādhāsoāmī version of Guru Gobind Singh's life after Nander appear in K. Singh, A Great Saint. Baba Jaimal Singh. His Life and Teachings, p. 10. See also McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, p. 121 and chapter I of this study.
127. The legend behind Kabīr's four incarnations appears in A. Singh, The Ocean of Love. The Anurāg Sāgar of Kabir, pp. 85-168.
128. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 108.
129. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 109. Bābā Sawan Singh gives the verses quoted from the janam sakhī as M 1 Janam Sakhi. See also Sri Rāg M 4 (4) Chhant Adi Granth p. 79.
130. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 125. On p. 125 of the same volume we read that: "GURUS COME FROM SACH KHAND UNDER THE ORDERS OF THE LORD FOR TAKING BACK THE SOULS".
131. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 83.
132. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 121.
133. Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Prose) pp. 42-43.
134. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 214. see also p. 205 of the same volume.
135. Rāg Gond (1-4) Adi Granth p. 872.
136. See Discourses on Sant Mat, pp. 274-275.
137. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 206.
138. See Gurnat Siddhant Vol. V p. 206. The belief that the Satgurū is able to lighten some of the disciple's karmic load is not unique to Rādhāsoāmī Mat. It also figures in Hindu mythology. See W. D., O'Flaherty, Hindu myths: A Source Book (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 264-257.

139. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 207.
140. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 228.
141. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V pp. 229-230.
142. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol V p. 227.
143. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 228.

CHAPTER V

SURAT ŚABD YOGA IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

This chapter explores Bābā Sawan Singh's teachings on Surat Śabd Yoga in the Gurmat Siddhānt. It interprets and analyzes the manner in which this form of yoga is presented as a vehicle of salvation. It concentrates on four themes. The first is Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of ignorance and suffering. The next is that of salvation. This is followed by the meaning of yoga in Sant Mat and finally the yogic techniques employed in Surat Śabd Yoga.

Bābā Sawan Singh's view of ignorance acts as a backdrop as well as a launching pad for his discourses on Surat Śabd Yoga. We shall examine how he treats the problem of ignorance in relation to bondage which in turn is linked to universal suffering. In the Gurmat Siddhānt bondage and suffering is explained in relation to the fall of man, the working of the mind and the law of karma. This relationship will be studied. We shall also analyze what is said about salvation in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

We then examine what Bābā Sawan Singh has to say about the term yoga, the Sant philosophy of inner devotion, the status of Surat Śabd Yoga, initiation, the discipline of Simran (remembering the divine names), Dhyān (seeing meditation) and Bhajan (hearing meditation).

The Problem of Ignorance

In what appears to be a reference to the belief that all existence is suffering, (1) Bābā Sawan Singh remarks that:

The whole world is full of worry, anxiety and tension. The reason for this chaos is the disturbed state of the people. The world has progressed in every other way but in the realm of spirituality people have remained ignorant. Man is ignorant since he does not know his own value. Man may obtain control over all wordly things but if he does not know his own soul his whole life is useless. (2)

Like Patanjali (3) Bābā Sawan Singh sees all suffering as the product of ignorance. This is not any and every kind of ignorance. It is ignorance of the true nature of reality. He is referring here to what is commonly termed "metaphysical ignorance". The belief expressed here is that man's everyday perception of reality is deceptive. This is because his assumptions about the true nature of reality are mistaken. Ignorance is seen here as illusory perception, which arises when the real object of perception is hidden and an illusory reality is projected into man's consciousness.

For Bābā Sawan Singh illusory perception is ideational knowledge. It is knowledge which is governed by the intellect. It involves representational cognition. It is therefore not direct, unmediated knowledge. It does not permit us to catch sight of the multiplicity of creation. Direct knowledge, on the other hand, does. For Bābā Sawan Singh the only meaningful knowledge is experiential knowledge. The idea of false belief or ignorance projected in the Gurmat Siddhant is

the one contained in the avidyā doctrine of Advaita Vedānta and reflected in Patañjali's theory of nescience. (4)

The Sanskrit term avidyā, which means, literally "absence of knowledge" or "false belief" has been used in different senses in different Indian philosophical systems. In Advaita Vedānta avidyā is used in connection with another key concept, namely māyā. Both avidyā and māyā are two aspects of the same ontological principle. In Advaita philosophy, ultimate reality is beyond all changes. The world is not wholly real but a world of appearance. Since the world is mere appearance our perception of it is also illusory. Just as māyā is the ontological principle underlying the world, avidyā is the epistemological principle that vitiates our perceptual experience. God is the absolute and only reality, and we ought to know this reality. Instead we see the world, and not what lies behind it. (5)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt, however, no attempt is made to explore the link between avidyā and māyā. Bābā Sawan Singh speaks of both as if these concepts represent the same entity. Ignorance is what he calls "not knowing the soul". Man does not "know" his soul because he does not know the God that lies behind the veil of the illusory reality of the world. Instead he misinterprets reality and accepts māyā as that which truly exists.

Bābā Sawan Singh's teaching on ignorance does not use the sophisticated terminology or possess the argumentative structure of Advaita Vedānta. He simply speaks of unregenerate man being ignorant

by virtue of his not knowing the true nature of his inner self. This ignorance has its roots in the condition of bondage.

The soul, we are told, is bound to the materiality of the mind and body. Man is ignorant because he misapprehends the true nature of the soul and confuses it with the mind. Here we find evidence of Bābā Sawan thinking in Sāṃkhyan terms. (6) He seems to be saying something about the self's attachment to the non-self, though he does not use the same terms as Sāṃkhya does. What Bābā Sawan Singh intends to highlight here is the state of confusion that arises when the mind is mistaken for the soul. Bābā Sawan Singh believes that the so long as the soul and spirit are associated with one another suffering will continue. The soul must therefore be disassociated from the mind. Only then is the soul able to generate knowledge about its own true nature.

Bābā Sawan Singh also has something in common here with Rāmānuja. Both consider this kind of bondage to be restrictive. It restricts the freedom of the soul which is essentially spiritual and God-like. By itself the soul is capable of participating in the nature of divine bliss. But since it is bound to the mind which is of material nature, it becomes attached to matter and to the pains arising from this material nature. As a result it loses sight of the ultimate reality of God. This is seen as the tragedy of the soul and the cause of all suffering. (7)

The Fall of Man

But how did this condition of bondage come into being ? Bābā Sawan Singh's answer to this question is in the form of the Rādhāsoāmī version of the fall of man. It can be summarized as follows. As God was creating the different cosmic planes, the soul became detached from its original source (i.e. God) and began descending into the lower realms before becoming locked in the physical body, anchored in the physical world. The soul then identified itself with the body and mind, becoming entangled in the world of illusion. It has remained there ever since, wandering aimlessly from birth to birth, perpetuating the cycle of transmigration.

In one of his letters to one of his early American disciples, Bābā Sawan Singh explains:

Our spirit is the son of Sat Purush and was lent to Kal Purush (the Master of the Second Grand Division) to fulfill the function of evolution of his division and the one below. Kal Purush then covered the soul, first in the instrumental (causal) body; second in the subtle body; and third in the physical body. He then created several kinds of internal and external restrictions and obstacles so that the spirit would be entangled in them forever. When the Sant Sat Guru incarnates on this earth to release the souls from the material covers he first teaches them that this place is not their permanent abode, and their function here is to find the means to return to their own Home, whence they came in the beginning. (8)

Shiv Dayāl Singh's version of the fall is not entirely dissimilar to the one stated above. He is recorded as having said:

In reality the Shabd is all-pervading, but since the soul's descent into Pind (the physical body), it has acquired an outward tendency and has become engrossed in external sounds. But for that, the work of the world would not go on. Now, the soul cannot get at the Shabd within until it comes into contact with a perfect Sat Guru and submits to Him. When it submits to the Sat Guru and Satsang it will come out from the snares of the world. (9)

Both explanations suggest the following. Our predicament is that the soul is completely hidden under the cover of mind and body. Innumerable births ago the soul became separated from its lofty source and began to transmigrate in the material world. The object of Sant Mat is therefore seen to be that of fostering an awareness in the disciple of his true situation, and to provide the means for him to recover his true identity and return to his own true home in God. This, however, is only possible through coming into contact with a Satgurū and practising Surat Śabd Yoga.

Both Bābā Sawan Singh and Shīv Dayāl Singh perceive the root of the embodied soul's predicament to be the mind. The mind is seen as constantly pulling the soul downwards into the world of the senses. The solution is therefore to redirect the mind. This is achieved when the mind's downward tendencies are reversed and turned inward in order that it becomes tuned to Śabd with the help of the initiating Satgurū. It is only then that the soul might attain release from the mind and be guided back to God. (10) It is believed that so long as the mind is linked to outward things, scattering its attention upon outer

objects there can be no detachment of the soul from bodily limitations. (11)

In Bābā Sawan Singh's view the method by which this detachment can be achieved is Surat Śabd Yoga. It is his belief that it is only through its practice that the soul can be freed from the bondage of the body and the attractions of the mind. (12) He emphasizes that:

The Satsang of the Satguru and association with Him reorientate the mind and turn it Godward. Contemplation of the form of the Master enables it to stay there and to contact the Divine Melody, the Heavenly Sound, the Unstruck Music, which takes it to its place of origin in Trikutī. (13)

The Nature and Role of the Mind

It would be appropriate at this stage to look at what he understands to be the nature and the role of mind. The concept of mind (man) has a lengthy history. In the Rg. Veda it connotes "soul" and is very close in meaning to ātman. (14) In the Upanisads the two terms manas (organ of thought) and citta (seat of thinking) assume a quality best translated as mind. (15) In Vedānta manas emerges explicitly as a part or function of antahkarana, the seat of collective thought and feeling. (16)

Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of mind lacks both definitional depth and precision. However, the following can be said in general terms about

it. Like that of Gurū Nānak, (17) Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of mind lacks the sophistication of the Vedic and Upanisadic definitions mentioned above. It appears to come closer to the yogic concept of mind as the "inner sense". (18) Bābā Sawan Singh seems to use the term to mean that faculty which not only thinks and decides but also feels. It is viewed as the source of all human good and evil, something that must be detached from the body and realigned to the soul before being finally merged in God. (19)

Both Gurū Nānak and Bābā Sawan Singh view the mind of unregenerate man as being erratic. It leads him into worldly attachments which are the very antithesis of salvation. The mind is attracted to the senses which draws the mind along with them. The senses are continually changing and fleeting and they make the mind inconsistent and erratic. (20) The mind therefore has to be retrained but not ousted for it is the same mind which is the abode of God if only man could recognize it. (21)

The mind must also be purified, its evil tendencies eradicated. The mind gives rise to five negative impulses ; lust, anger, attachment, avarice and ego. (22) These five passions keep the disciple tied to the world of the physical body. Lust pulls the mind downwards, anger spreads it outwards, attachment keeps it chained to the world, avarice fans it's desire for material possessions and ego hinders and prevents it from turning inward toward God.

From these five basic impulses spring all the deeds of violence and falsehood which earn one adverse karmas and so endlessly protract the cycle of transmigration. Such impulses and the actions which proceed from them are the hallmark of the self-willed, unregenerate individual. They provide evidence of an impure mind, filled not with the love for God but with pure self-centredness. This is the condition that must be transcended if there is to be any release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. For Bābā Sawan Singh the answer to this predicament is Surat Śabd Yoga.

According to Bābā Sawan Singh it is the mind that creates that state of consciousness which he terms ignorance. (23) Strangely enough he does not mention the other four states usually associated with the workings of the mind. No mention is made of *asmitā* (sense of personality), *rāga* (love and attachment to material things), *deśa* (hatred and aversion to pain), *abhiniveśa* (the will to live). In Sāṅkhyan philosophy these are the five *kleśas* (afflictions) of *citta* (the mind). (24)

The most likely explanation for this is that the Gurmat Siddhant is a loosely put assembled set of discourses. It is not a philosophical treatise with the expositional qualities associated with such a treatise. Bābā Sawan Singh sometimes does not attempt to explain the philosophical concepts he uses. Terminology tends to be loosely and selectively used for the purpose of illustrating a point or explaining the tenets of Sant Mat by way of comparison or analogy. This explains also the apparent lack of completeness of much of what is referred to

in the work and makes it awkward to interpret what Bābā Sawan Singh actually has in mind especially when he uses foreign terms.

This problem is best demonstrated by way of illustration. In the quotation below we find concepts from Sāṃkhyan psychology being introduced without being explained or placed in the context of Sant Mat. They are simply introduced without comment:

There are four instruments of the mind:
Chit (memory, inner attention, the instrument
of thinking); Man (the instrument of meditation);
Buddhi (intellect, the instrument of
discrimination); and Ahankar (the instrument of
egoism). These relate to intellect, comprehension,
discrimination and cognition. Knowledge is the
result. (25)

A careful reading of the text in which this passage appears does not provide the reader with any clues as to what is intended by introducing this classification. It seems to have been included in the discourse in a rather ad hoc manner without prior thought as to its proper function. As a result one is unable to analyze the manner in which Sāṃkhyan categories can be seen to relate to Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of mind.

When referring to the nature of the mind, particular attention is paid to what is considered to be one of its most disturbing qualities. This quality is its fickleness. This theme not only recurs repeatedly in Hindu literature like the Bhagavad Gītā (26) but has also attracted the attention of the many Sants. (27) For Bābā Sawan Singh:

Sometimes the mind is said to be like the
winds of heaven which blow without ceasing

from one part of the world to another. It is the nature of the mind to focus first on one thing and then on something else. This moment it builds castles in the air, and the next it demolishes them. It is tossed between objects of love and hatred, as a feather in a stormy wind. In short, the mind is never still. (28)

It is these fluctuations of the mind that have to be brought under control. The seeker has to vanquish the mind, make it still. Surat Śabd Yoga, it is believed, provides a means of achieving this control.

The mind has to be stilled in order for it to release its hold on the soul. It is only then, we are told that the mind and soul realize their true identity. Bābā Sawan Singh speaks here of the soul returning to its home in the causal plane after being released from the clutches of the mind:

Rising up, the mind now returns to its original home in Trikutī and releases the soul from its iron grip. Freed from the restraint of the physical, astral and causal coverings, rid of the three gunas (attributes) and the twenty-five prakritis (tendencies), the soul for the first time becomes aware of its close kinship with the Creator. It then realises that it is distinctly different from the mind and the body, and that these were only coverings in which it was tightly enclosed. It discovers also that it is a ray of the never setting Sun, a drop of the ever-lasting Ocean, a spark of the Eternal Flame, the essence of the Immortal Lord. (29)

The Mind-Soul Relationship

Bābā Sawan Singh sees the soul as an energizing force. This force however, is being constantly weakened by the mind which attaches itself to the soul:

While the mind derives its life force and energy from the soul, it at the same time does everything possible to suffocate the soul. It bites the very hand that feeds it, and acts in such a way as to sap the soul of its energy.

By itself the soul is powerless to escape from the cage in which it is imprisoned, for it is fastened tight with the bonds of strongest steel. A ray of the Omnipotent, the Omniscient and the Omnipresent Sun that it is, it has become completely forgetful of its exalted position, its innate purity, and its self-effulgent light. (30)

He further states that it is the mind that contaminates the soul:

God dwells within us, but the mirror of our mind is unclean and covered with dirt. This veils the Lord from our view. Just as it is not possible to see one's reflection in rough, and storm-tossed waters, so also it is not possible to see God's reflection in a restless tempest-tossed mind. (31)

Bābā Sawan Singh appears to have been influenced here by Sāṅkhyan thinking. What is being said here is that it is the mind that is the biggest obstacle to spiritual development. Although the mind is born of matter it derives its energy from the soul. Involvement in the external world is its basic tendency. Urged on by its fondness of sense pleasures it becomes a slave of the senses. Both the mind and the senses are seen as being responsible for eclipsing the soul. The mind is seen as clinging to the soul like a parasite. (32)

Bābā Sawan Singh is reiterating the Sant belief that the soul is originally pure and divine, and its natural tendency is inwards and upwards. But since it is enveloped by the mind it has become impure in the company of the senses and through its deep-rooted attachment to the gross world of matter. The mind therefore has to be made pure and brought under control. This can be achieved by practising Surat Śabd Yoga. (33)

Like Kabīr, he states his case for the cleansing of the mind in order to make it a fitting abode for God. The mind must also be controlled so as to ensure that its attention no longer strays from God, with whom union is sought. On the other hand, should the mind be allowed to retain its impurity the penalty is certain death. (34)

This emphasis on the purification of the mind features prominently in Sāṅkhya yoga. Here there is mention of the individual mind (chittam) being purified by concentration, contemplation and meditation so as to enable it to catch the higher reflection of puruṣa. The goal of yoga is to unite the individual mind with the cosmic mind (35) so that it may reflect the absolute Puruṣa. When the mind becomes absolutely pure it is enlightened with the light of Puruṣa and led to Nirvāṇam. (36)

The Nature and Role of Karma

The link that Bābā Sawan Singh seeks to establish between suffering and karma is a straightforward one. It is clothed in the following terms:

Actually, all actions that are performed under the influence of the ego-whether good or bad-are equally responsible for binding an individual to this world. Even in the Gita it is stated that good and bad actions are equally responsible for the binding of a person. Good actions may temporarily give us a reward in heaven, and bad actions may bring us the punishment of hell, but the bondage of transmigration remains. (37)

What is being said here is that suffering and bondage is related to action. They are considered to be the result of one's past actions, the beginning of which is not known. In the state of bondage ignorance inspires action (karma) and karma brings about rebirth which in turn creates a new series of karma. Bondage is seen here as a state of attachment to desire. This issues in good and bad deeds, generates merit and demerit with their consequences of happiness and sorrow. The latter produces more desire and the cycle goes on repeating itself thus perpetuating the karma-bound process of transmigration.

His view that the doctrine of karma represents a law of retribution confirms the view of karma in Hindu thinking. Each soul is seen as going through a series of reincarnations reaping the fruit of thoughts, desires, and actions performed in the past but which influence present and future lives. This karma is then stored in our inner constitution which functions as a receptacle for *samskāras* or

karmic residues that are responsible for binding the soul to the new round of births and deaths. (38)

Bābā Sawan Singh differentiates between three types of karma. His classification appears to be based on one found in Śāṅkara's Brahmāsūtrabhāṣya and Bhagavadgītābhāṣya. However, the scheme outlined in the Gurmat Siddhānt does not possess the depth or complexity of the schemes that appear in Śāṅkara's works. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we read:

Karma or action is of three kinds: Sinchit, Pralabdh and Kriyaman. Sinchit is the store karma; Pralabdh is the fate karma; and Kriyaman is the fruit karma. Store karmas are the result of actions of past lives, which have not yet been paid for nor assigned. Fate karmas constitute that portion of the results of actions in past lives which have been allotted to our present life, and on account of which this human body has been given to us; that is, for undergoing the results of good and bad karmas according to our fate. Kriyaman constitutes the new karmas resulting from actions which we perform in this life. In other words, while undergoing our destiny (fate karmas) we are daily incurring new karmas as well, the results of which will be undergone in the next life as fate, or part as fate and part as Sinchit in some future life. (39)

The references here seem to indicate that Bābā Sawan Singh is talking about the types of karmic residues. Śāṅkara speaks of prārabdhakarma. These are residues which are determined at birth and work themselves out during the present life. Then there are sāncitakarma which are residues which are produced by acts performed in a previous life, but which remain dormant in this present life. Finally, there are sāncīyamāna or āngamin karma. These are karmic

residues resulting from acts during this just-ending lifetime. They will mature in some subsequent lifetime in the normal course of events.

For reasons best known to Bābā Sawan Singh himself special attention is paid to fate karmas or destiny. He perceives Hukām as the divine expression of destiny or fate. Instead of explaining the implications of this equation we are referred to the Adi Granth, in this instance the verse named is Suhi Mah 4. (40) as one example. (41) He does this in order to drive home the point that human freedom in action is limited for it is God's command that decides his destiny. Man's fate is said to be "unescapable and irrevocable" (42) and "imprinted on our foreheads". (43)

According to the view put forward in the Gurmat Siddhānt the rules governing karma are beyond human comprehension and not empirically verifiable. This is stated in no uncertain terms:

We understand that innumerable souls are living in Sat Lok - in the region of Pure Spirit, free from dissolution. What was the previous karma or action, as a result of which these souls are placed in one region or the other? How did these regions come into existence? When were they created? The answer to all these questions are beyond the limits of time and space, and it is not possible for anybody to find them. We can only, in all humility, ask Him Who is the Creator of this universe and who sent the souls into these regions. (44)

The Relationship between Karma and Free Will

Bābā Sawan Singh does not dispute the belief that the law of karma is an unavoidable and universal cycle. (45) But though it is universal it is not final. Each individual shares in it but can pass beyond it. Deliverance can be achieved by the performance of meritorious deeds in accordance with the precepts of Surat Śabd Yoga.

He does not view the law of karma as a fatalistic principle. Each individual is to a certain extent free to exercise his will. He can, in other words, direct his own destiny in a limited manner. He must therefore assume responsibility for his present and future actions. The idea that effort and destiny do not negate each other reminds us of the Bhagavad Gītā. (46) Bābā Sawan Singh's position here is that although the greater plan of things is predetermined we are still free to choose the actions we wish to take. His view is that man is not ultimately free to chart his destiny. In the final analysis, it is argued, it is God's unseen hand that guides us through our actions and shapes the final product of our endeavours. Yet with God's grace there can be freedom of action:

Action is in the hands of the one who performs it, but the Grace and the Blessing of God are the right of only a few, gained through his mercy alone. It is no doubt true that human beings have freedom of action to a certain extent, but the key of such actions is in His Hands. As long as we do not have His Grace, we poor mortals have no power to achieve anything, less so to realize Him. It follows therefore the the Originator and the root of all actions is God Himself, and He cannot be realized by our own efforts alone. We can realize Him only within ourselves by the Grace of a Master. (47)

The Gurmat Siddhant does not see karma operating in an entirely naturalistic fashion. Its author believes that prior actions effect subsequent events yet not entirely without the intervention of God. Bābā Sawan Singh is suggesting that there must be some theistic overseeing of karma. He argues that karma is administered through the action of a conscious agent, namely, God.

It can be said that Bābā Sawan Singh might be advocating the following. Since the law of karma is an unintelligent and unconscious law, there must be a conscious God who knows the merits and demerits which persons have earned by their actions, and who functions as an instrumental cause in helping individuals reap their appropriate fruits. By implication this means that God supervises the entering of the soul into the appropriate reborn body. The law of karma, as conceived here functions as the expression of God's will and grace in the world.

In Bābā Sawan Singh's thinking there is a place for divine grace and forgiveness. The law of karma is not held to be inviolable. There is room for acts of divine grace. God (through the Satgurū) intervenes at times on the devotee's behalf. The connection between previous actions and present condition is therefore partially severed. At this juncture he does not see the need to address the following philosophically potent question. Why does God then not intervene more often to reduce the enormous pain and suffering in the world? In the Sant tradition this question often solicits the response that God's actions are

governed by divine wisdom, which is beyond philosophical scrutiny and human comprehension.

The Question of Salvation

Bābā Sawan Singh recognizes the traditional four goals of life of Hindu philosophy. He lists them as Dharma (dharma), Ārth (ārtha), Kām (kāma) and Moksh (mokṣa). In Hindu philosophy the first three are usually regarded as gaunā puruṣārtha (subsidiary ends). The last, mokṣa is termed param puruṣārtha (the highest end). Thus Dharma, Ārth and Kām are viewed as relative ends. They have to do with the relations of finite beings in the empirical sphere and lack absolute significance. Mokṣa is, on the other hand, an absolute value and is not comparable to any of the relative ends in life. In this sense it is the highest that men should desire or seek. (48)

The definition of the term Dharma that is proposed in the Gurmat Siddhānt is "that, which binds and guides". It is stated that the "world is sustained by Dharma and is the source of contentment and social harmony". (49) In general terms this understanding of the term does not stray in essence from the conventional definition found in Hindu literature. (50) Bābā Sawan Singh lists the attributes of Dharma as Kṣhama (forgiveness), Ahimsā (non-violence, compassion), Dayā (mercy, piety), Mridu (sweet nature and true behaviour), Sat vachan (truthfulness), Tap (self-control, penance), Dān (charity), Shil (continence), Souch (cleanliness) and Kina Kṛishna

(desirelessness). What he is doing here is drawing up a list of restraints (yama) and observances (niyama) (51) that represent two limbs of Astāṅga yoga. (52)

Having noted in passing that Artha means wealth, (53) a rather loose explanation for Kāma is provided by Bābā Sawan Singh. It is translated as "worldly" and "spiritual" desires with the emphasis on "spiritual desires". In the Gurmat Siddhānt it is stated that:

By the Grace of the Master, all types of desires-whether wordly or spiritual are fulfilled. By being in His company, the worldly desires, which are ephemeral, are all effaced; and spiritual desires become very strong. These ardent spiritual desires are fulfilled by His Grace, and are the only desires we should entertain. (54)

Mokṣa is defined in the Gurmat Siddhānt as salvation, taken here to mean freedom from attachment. It means liberation from the worldly fetters of grief, sorrow and the other evils of life. It is the state in which the soul, in spite of performing actions does not suffer from the bondage of sin and remains unaffected by the merits and demerits of action. Bābā Sawan Singh also talks of freedom from the clutches of the mind and stresses that detachment is not renunciation. We are told that "remaining unattached while living in this world of attachment is the Salvation of the Saints". (55)

Conceived as non-attachment, salvation presupposes a prior state of bondage. This bondage is the result of the mind being attached to the external world. This attachment in turn produces desire motivated

action which perpetuates the cycle of transmigration. But how will this attachment cease ? Bābā Sawan Singh's reply is, by overcoming the mind. Yet more important is freeing the soul from the clutches of the mind. This according to Bābā Sawan Singh is the ultimate salvation achievable only through the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga:

True Salvation (Salvation of Soul)
is attained by means of a certain spiritual practice. This practice is called "Surat Shabd Abhyas" which means the practice of uniting the soul with the Shabd (Word, Sound Current or Audible Life Stream). By means of such a practice one can achieve True Salvation even while living in this very body. (56)

For Bābā Sawan Singh true salvation is no less than the spiritual emancipation of the soul, leading ultimately to the cessation of embodied existence. This means release from the endless cycle of death and rebirth. Mokṣa means "to set free" or "to release". (57) It is a state of liberation in which the soul enjoys transcendental freedom in God. This is the real purpose of all spiritual endeavours. Bābā Sawan Singh writes:

The real purpose of leading a spiritual life
is that man should tear away the veil of
Maya (Illusion) and Matter and recognize
oneself as the Soul, which is superconscious
and is a particle of the ocean of
Superconsciousness, so that he may blend into
that Ocean taking its colors and qualities. (58)

Mystical union is the final end to all suffering. It is the only true salvation. At this point one is reminded of a passage from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad that aptly highlights how Bābā Sawan Singh feels about true salvation:

I know the Supreme Person of sun like colour
(lustre) beyond the darkness. Only by
knowing Him does one pass over death. There
is no other path for going there. (59)

The belief that Surat Śabd Yoga is the only meaningful way to
salvation is linked with what is said about the purpose of human life
which is:

to achieve communion with the Lord
by engaging in and remaining happy in His
remembrance and by loving Him and His
creation. (60)

Failure to practise Surat Śabd Yoga is said to mean forfeiting every
chance of salvation. This means rejecting the very meaning and purpose
of human existence. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we read that:

The gallows of the angel of death and the
fearful chaurasi (cycle of eighty four)
is for every one. One should, therefore,
through the practice of Surat Shabd Yoga
make life fruitful, for one has attained
birth in the human form only through a
great fortune. (61)

Once again we find evidence of Tantric thinking often adopted by the
Sants. Besides the Sikh Gurūs (62) we find Kabīr (63) and Tulsī
Sāhib (64) saying the same thing.

The Significance of Kālīyuga

Bābā Sawan Singh's views on salvation are closely linked to his perception of the role of Kālīyuga referred to in the Gurnat Siddhant as the Iron Age. The following passages emphasize Bābā Sawan Singh's beliefs about the significance of Surat Sabd Yoga in the Iron Age:

In the Iron Age, the outer repetition of mantras and the practice of austerities do not lead to salvation. The repetition of mantras, austerities, self-control, fasts, worship and so forth do not eradicate the feeling of egotism. The soul is entangled in the cleverness of the mind and the jungle of Maya. It does not find the way of escape from these snares. (65)

The real austerity consists in finding the Master and practising the Yoga of the Sound Current. Action, duties, purity, self-control, repetition and austerities are all based on the Shabd or inner Sound. (66)

This emphasis on the indispensability of Surat Sabd Yoga as the only efficient means of salvation in Kālīyuga is one of the fundamental beliefs of the Rādhāsoāmī doctrine. Shiv Dayāl Singh for example, has this to say:

In this age one cannot succeed in any other way except by devotion to the Sat Guru and the practice of Surat Shabd Yoga. All outer forms of worship are like striking at the snake hole. The snake will not be killed in this way. It is likely to reappear at any time. The proper way is to catch the snake (mind) and this will be done only by devotion to the Sat guru and the Shabd. By no other means will it be caught. Those who will not accept these words, will gain nothing, and those who follow the instructions of such will also come to grief. (67)

This preoccupation with Kālīyuga is linked to the Rādhāsoāmī interpretation of history. True redemption according to this

interpretation, has become possible only in Kālīyuga. In the course of innumerable births and deaths, some of the heavy karmic burdens of those in the causal planes and below had lightened. This resulted for some in the development of a deep aversion for the world and a longing for spiritual

emancipation. Such a development prompted God in His divine wisdom to send down Sants to proclaim the teachings of Sant Mat and introduce the discipline of Surat Śabd Yoga. This yogic discipline would provide chosen individuals with the instrument for achieving final release. In the Gurmat Siddhant we read:

But now, in this formidable Kalyug (the Iron Age), God Almighty, in His abundant Grace, has sent His own incarnations and Param Sants namely, Kabir, Guru Nanak and others to preach the doctrine of Master-Disciple Service. (68)

It must, however, be said that the idea of Kālīyuga being the age of transformation is not unique to Sant Mat. Its history dates back to the Purāṇic period. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa we see the Iron Age being looked upon as the final stage before the return to the Golden Age. O' Flaherty's excerpt from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa serves well to illustrate this. It reads as follows:

The people of the Kali Age will take refuge in the chasms between the mountains, and they will eat honey, vegetables, roots, fruits, leaves and flowers. They will have too many children, and they will be forced to endure cold, wind, sun and rain. No one's age span will reach twenty-three years. The Kalkin will destroy men of evil acts and thoughts and he will reestablish everything in its own dharma. Immediately at the conclusion of the exhausted Kali Age, the minds of the people will become pure as faultless crystal, and they

will be as if awakened at the conclusion of a night. These men the residue of mankind, will be transformed and they will be the seeds of the creatures and will give birth to offspring, conceived at that very time, who will follow the ways of the Golden Age. (69)

The Meaning of Yoga

Closely linked to what has been said about the significance of Kālīyuga is Bābā Sawan Singh's views on the meaning of yoga in general and Surat Śabd Yoga in particular. We noted in an earlier section that Surat Śabd Yoga is believed to facilitate the freeing of the soul from the bondage of the mind. Surat Śabd Yoga, it can be said, therefore, allows the practitioner to "know his soul". This idea is expressed in the following passage:

Spirituality awakens the "knowing" faculty of the soul. When one has attained such a state, he knows what soul is and how it can meet its Master, the Lord. The name of this practice to attain this consciousness is called yog. (70)

Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of yoga is consistent with that of Yajñavalkya who defines it as "the union of the jivatman and the paramatma". (71) In the Markandeya Purāṇa (36.1) (72) one finds the concepts of "union" and "disunion" being used in association with the term yoga. Yoga is described here as disunion with ignorance and union with Brahman.

Etymologically speaking, the word yoga is derived from yuj which means "to bind together" or "to yoke". The discipline's fundamental aim, however, is to break the bond that ties man to his woeful condition of universal suffering. By delivering man from bondage, yoga aims at isolating the soul from all that causes bondage. This state of isolation is at the same time a state of original unity, in that the soul returns to its pristine state. Yoga has, therefore, to be understood from the viewpoint of its double function. On the one hand, it disengages man from his environment by isolating him from his usual state of being. On the other hand, it returns him to his original state of being which is free from temporality. (73) Bābā Sawan Singh accepts this definition. More imposing, however, is his emphasis that yoga is a path of inward discovery.

Surat Sabd Yoga and the Philosophy of Inner Religion

Sant doctrine with its strong emphasis on the interior quality of religion does not encourage institutionalized religion. On the contrary the Sant tradition persistently stresses the futility of institutional loyalties, sectarian allegiance and ritualistic formalities. Salvation is not earned by rituals and conventions. To be a Sant is to be free from institutional obligations and organized rituals. (74)

Bābā Sawan Singh's position on these matters is no different. Spiritual pursuits are not confused with external superficialities. It

is a matter of the heart expressed through the appropriate medium . This medium is Surat Śabd Yoga. In the Gurmat Siddhānt, Bābā Sawan Singh's philosophy of inner religion revolves around the concepts of anti-externalism, turning inward and dying while living.

Anti-Ritualism

Like his fellow Sants Bābā Sawan Singh stresses the futility of external forms of worship. He dismisses them as empty ritualism with has nothing in common with genuine spiritual pursuits. He notes:

For the spiritually blind, the mosques and temples made of earth and water are every thing. But those whose hearts are illuminated and who possess true knowledge, know that their own heart is the true temple and mosque, wherein the Lord can be found. (75)

Calling Surat Śabd Yoga "the forgotten path", he refers to it as "the science of the soul" and writes:

The teachings of Surat - Shabd Yog form the basis of every religion, but this basis has disappeared and only the formal rituals are in vogue. The teachings of the Saints are not confined within the bounds of any book or creed, for it is a science of the soul. The purpose is to obtain spiritual bliss which cannot be obtained except through the company of the Saints (Satsangs). (76)

Spirituality was preached and practised more or less by founders and disciples of all religions, but in the course of time it declined and became obscure. People forgot the essence and took to rituals, rites and other outer forms of worship. Eventually, they became quite ignorant

about God-consciousness, how to achieve it, or what path to follow towards Realization. (77)

Defining the purpose of inner religion, Bābā Sawan Singh then notes:

The purpose of Sant Mat (spiritual religion) is wholly spiritual. It shows us how to investigate what the soul is, what its relationship with the Lord is and how to be reunited with Him. (78)

For Bābā Sawan Singh true religion is the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga and living a God centred life revolving around the principle of Nām. This message is one that has become the hallmark of Sant philosophy. A look at the works of any prominent Sant will confirm this. In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition, for example, one finds Shiv Dayāl Singh dismissing ritualism and exhorting the reader to follow the yogic discipline known only to the Saints:

WHAT FRUIT WILL THOSE JIVAS REAP, WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE PATHS OF THE SAINTS, AND ARE ENGAGED IN OUTWARD OBSERVANCES, RITUALS AND DELUSIONS (79)

One may recognize true Saints and Faqueers, in this way. They always inculcate the realization of God within one's self and do not permit waste of time in image worship, pilgrimages or the reading of religious books, nor do they preach the worship of Gods, incarnations and prophets. They teach only the practice of Sahaj Yoga, or the Surat Shabd method, excepting which there is no other way of realizing the true Lord. (80)

It is interesting that no reference is made either to Kabīr's (81) or Gurū Nānak's critique of religious formalism. (82) However, the passages we have examined above suggest that Bābā Sawan Singh adopts

Gurū Nānak's position on interior religion. Gurū Nānak taught that true yoga had little to do with worldly attachments, (83) elaborate yogic techniques, (84) asceticism (85) or elaborate rituals (86). The message in the Gurmat Siddhānt concurs with that of Gurū Nānak. Both postulate that yoga is interior religion. This is so because it involves an inner attitude centred on Nām and as such is not concerned with outward practices. (87)

Turning Inward

The idea that the body is the temple of God (88) is already present in the Upanisads. (89) However, it is in Tantrism that the dictum "all truth lies within" became a central theme and one that has been adopted by the Sants. (90) Bābā Sawan Singh gives it expression in the Gurmat Siddhānt. He perceives the human body as a field in which the seed of Nām is to be sown. It is spoken of as the abode of God (91) and is likened to an "ocean of spirituality":

- The body is an ocean of Spirituality which none can fathom. Only one who dies while living can obtain pearls of super-consciousness from it. Such is one, if he enters the ocean of his own body even once, can recover a treasure of super-consciousness from it. Otherwise, the treasure remains completely hidden. (92)

The human body contains millions of universes and celestial domains, running streams, and vast mountain ranges. God the Eternal, is also within. The Guru advises you to go into this city and engage in the trade of Shabd, that is hold constant communion with Naam. Withdraw into yourself, quaff the God-like Nectar. (93)

Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of turning inward is directly related to the Nāth practice of ultā-sādhana (inward regression). (94) Ultā-sādhana involves the regression of the biological and psychological process. The aim here is to activate the kuṇḍalinī force, seen here as the instrument for achieving superconsciousness. The medieval Sants accepted the principle of inward regression. They did not, however, agree with the principle of making the biological and physiological processes instruments for the realization of truth. Instead they reinterpreted ultā-sādhana to mean the inverting of conscious attention inward with the aim of connecting it with the Sabd or the celestial sound current. By interiorizing attention, concentration was focussed on the inner recesses of the self where God was seen to dwell. (95)

Dying while Living

The term Jīte Jī Mārṇā (literally, to die when alive) is used in the Gurmat Siddhant to describe the experience of dying-while-living. (96) It is a condition not unlike that called pratyahāra (withdrawal of the senses). In Aṣṭāṅga yoga this exercise involves the complete withdrawal of sense consciousness from the external world with the aim of immobilizing the mind and transcending body consciousness. (97) In Sant Mat, dying to the body or dying-while-living involves interiorizing concentration at the third eye centre, (98) which leads subsequently to transcending body consciousness.

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Generally speaking there is some truth in this claim. When referring to the Yoga Sūtras, Bābā Sawan Singh probably had in mind certain yogic exercises like dhāraṇā (mental fixation), pratyahāra (withdrawal of the senses) and dhyāna (contemplation). (109) These practices will be discussed with regard to Surat Śabd Yoga later on in the chapter. It is also true that the writings of Gorakṣināth and that of the Sahajīya Buddhists do refer to Kanpatha yoga (110) and Sahaj yoga (111) respectively. Surat Śabd Yoga is to a large extent moulded on these earlier forms. There is mention also of Śabda yoga in the Maitrī Upaniṣad (VI.22). Lastly, the student of Sant writings will be familiar with terms like surati śabda yoga (112) and Nām yoga (113) often associated with the early Sants named in the above passage.

Surat Śabd Yoga is defined in the Gurmat Siddhānt as:

the method by which the soul may become dissolved in the Shabd and become united with it so that it will never separate from it again. (114)

Bābā Sawan Singh then explains that Surat means "attention, consciousness or meditation or the soul" (115) Śabd is called the "melody-based Name or Power of God". Yoga is referred to as "unity of Surat and Shabd and becoming one with it". (116) Surat Śabd Yoga has often been termed the union of soul-consciousness with the divine inner sound or Sabd. (117)

Etymologically speaking the term surati is thought by scholars like Barthwal to be a Nāth synonym for the Sanskrit terms srota and smṛti.

Both terms carry the meaning memory or flow of mental activity .

(118) In Rādhāsoāmī terminology Surat means the soul or internal soul current. Bābā Sawan Singh prefers to use the term to accomodate the word soul as well as conscious attention. As we shall shortly see, he is prone to speak of Surat as the attentive (hearing) faculty of the soul. In this respect it can be said that he reinterprets

"memory" (as in smṛti or srota) to mean attentive faculty (of the soul). In doing this he has distanced himself from any association with the Tantric term su-ratī. Vaudeville informs us that medieval Vajrayāna Siddhas used this term to connote sexual enjoyment or voluptuousness. (119) The relationship of the soul (Surat) to the celestial sound current (Śabd) is presented in the following manner: Surat and Shabd are both the essence of the Lord. God Himself is Shabd as well as Surat". (120)

Here the identity of the soul with God is once again affirmed. This belief is readily accepted in Sant theology. It lends expression to the devotionism characteristic of Sant writings. Bābā Sawan Singh views the soul which is the inner core of human personality as being made for oneness with God.

We are informed that the soul possesses two faculties; the hearing faculty (Surat) and the seeing faculty (Nirat). "The Soul functions in listening within or doing Simran. The function of Nirat is that of seeing within or in doing contemplation". (121) Primarily we are being told here a little about the disciplines of Bhajan (hearing meditation) and Dhyān (seeing meditation). (122)

The Uniqueness of Surat Sabd Yoga

The Gurmat Siddhant maintains that:

Yogas are of many kinds: Pran Yoga is the practice of breath control; Hatha Yoga consists of physical postures. Both of these concern the gross and physical body and are of low merit. Those that pertain to the mind and intellect concern the astral body. Anand Yoga pertains to the causal body. This is superior to all other Yogas. The path of the Saints is Shabd Yoga, which is the life breath of all Yogas. (123)

If we ignore the inaccuracies of some of the statements in the above passage (124) it must be said that the passage is a significant one. We are introduced here to the contention that Surat Sabd Yoga is the crown of all yogas, i.e. the path of higher yoga. All other forms of yoga are considered to be secondary and viewed as lower forms. (125) Surat Sabd Yoga is considered to be the complete method. This is so, it is claimed, because it is only by practising it that the aspirant can release the soul from the shell of the mind and transport it to the realms beyond the causal plane. Other yogic practices, it is claimed, only facilitate spiritual development up to the causal plane and not beyond. This statement of faith is highlighted by Bābā Sawan Singh when he claims:

If one practices Surat Shabd Yog - which is a complete method, one's soul will be taken to its origin, the highest abode of the Lord which is beyond both dissolution and grand dissolution. (126)

Shiv Dayāl Singh's claim is no different:

Prāṇa Yoga and Buddhi Yoga do not go beyond Akāśh. Beyond that Surat can go only with the help of Shabd, and reach That Place where it can behold the Marvelous Being Who did not reveal Himself to the world during Sat Yuga, Tretā and Dwāpar. No one knew this secret. Now, in Kali Yuga, the Saints have made it known. (127)

Unlike the majority of yogic practices, Surat Śabd Yoga does not advocate the usual yogic techniques. These are considered ineffective and unimportant for the pursuit of higher spiritual goals. Rather, it is concerned with withdrawing the soul-current (Surat) from the nine apertures of the body - eyes, ears, nose, mouth, genitals and alimentary canal - and directing it towards the realms toward the pure spiritual plane (Sach Khand). This can be accomplished by attaching the mind's attention to Śabd, the celestial sound current believed to be emanating from Sach Khand. It is believed that when the mind becomes entranced with this divine melody it surges upward, releases the soul from its clutches. The mind then remains in its "home" at the causal plane. The soul is allowed to venture further and with the help of the inner Satgurū finally makes it to its original resting place in Sach Khand. For this reason the discipline is called the yoga of the celestial sound current. (128) It is the Śabd that occupies a central role and injects meaning into this form of yogic pursuit.

Surat Śabd Yoga is said to differ from the other yogas on three counts. It does not advocate Kāyā sādhanā (literally, the culture of the body, i.e. bodily discipline). (129) This explains the rejection of prāṇayama (breathing techniques) and āsanās (yogic postures).

These are considered unimportant and irrelevant to the pursuit of higher spiritual goals.

Proponents of the Tāntric Kāya sādhanā view the body as the microcosm of the universe. The discipline of Hatha yoga is used to gain mastery over mind and body. Śiva and Śakti are said to reside in the body. The former is said to reside in the sahasrāra cakra (the highest cerebral region). The latter is said to be found in the mūlādhara cakra (the lowest extremity of the spinal cord). The right half of the body is considered the domain of Śiva, the left half Śakti. Through the pingala nerve in the right flows the āpana wind which is called the stream of Śiva. Likewise through the nerve idā flows the prāṇa wind which is the stream of Śakti.

Hatha yoga exercises are aimed at activating the kuṇḍalinī śakti (130) and raising it up through suṣumnā (the central channel). In its passage upwards, the kuṇḍalinī successively pierces the six cakras and finally enters the sahasrāra cakra where it unites with Paramaśiva. Then and there the yogī is believed to attain mahāsuka (supreme bliss) and reaches the so-called Sahaja state. (131) For the Tāntrikās the attainment of the state of supreme bliss is equated with the attainment of bodily immortality. The question of escaping bodily mortality is the most salient feature of Hatha yoga. Liberation is sought in a transformed or transmateralized body called siddh^a-deha (the perfect body).

Sant Mat considers the body to be temporal and a hindrance. Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say about the reliance of conventional yoga on the lower cakras (and consequently the energies associated with them):

The six chakras centres of Brahmananda (the second spiritual region) are reflected in the regions below it. The reflection of the six centres of Anda (the astral region) is seen in Pinda, the physical universe. The Saints disregard the six lower centres of the body and enjoin the practice of listening to the celestial Music at the eye centre, which is above the six lower centres. They consider Surat-Shabd-Yoga (the Yoga of uniting the soul with the Divine Sound) to be the highest of all yogas. Its object is to connect the soul with the Shabd and by this means to merge the soul in the Supreme Silence (Ashbad), the Akeh (Unutterable) and the Nirala (Wonderful), from which it originally originated. Without the soul there can be no yoga or wordly activity. (132)

Careful study of this statement will indicate that Bābā Sawan Singh is clothing in milder language what has earlier been proclaimed in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. Shiv Dayāl Singh is uncompromising in his claims about the superiority of Surat Shabd Yoga. He proclaims:

Now just think how far away from the Original Place are those who concentrate on the navel center or the heart center, which are only reflected images of the Real. Even if they succeed in mastering those centers, what they will achieve will be only a reflection of the Original. Since they have no knowledge of the higher regions and the Goal, how can they reach the Final Stage or attain the Region of the Supreme Being? That is why the Saints Who have reached the highest and the Purest Regions of Sat Nām and Rādhā Swāmī tell the people that they are mistaken and deluded because they are seeking God where He cannot be found. (133)

In rejecting the activation of the lower cakras Bābā Sawan Singh argues that they allow access only to the astral and causal planes and nothing beyond that. Surat Śabd Yoga on the other hand commences at the gate to the causal plane (i.e. the so-called third eye) and with the help of Śabd allows the practitioner access to the higher realms. Implied here is the belief that the lower yogas operate with the lower form of motor energy currents. Surat Śabd Yoga in contrast utilizes the sensory current.

In Sant Mat we learn of two currents working within the body; the motor current and the sensory current. The motor current is responsible for sustaining and nourishing the bodily tissues. This current is used in Haṭha yoga and referred to as prāṇa. Surat Śabd Yoga deals exclusively with the sensory current. The sensory current is thought to disperse throughout the body from the third eye. It is that which withdraws from the body at the time of death. Surat Śabd Yoga teaches the withdrawal of the sensory current from the body and its drawing upward into the supraphysical realms. Explaining why the use of motor current is of no interest to the Saints he says:

The Saints knowingly forbid us from practising at the lower centres, for that would be like descending first to the ground floor from the second or higher floor in order to reach an upper storey. The method taught by the Saints enable us to commence our journey from the sixth-centre, which is also known as the Tisra Til or the Third Eye. (134)

Bābā Sawan Singh proceeds then to dismiss breathing techniques and yogic postures as having little value from the point view of Sant Mat.

(135) In what could be construed to be a reference to Gurū Nānak's critique of Nāth Yoga (136), he like the Sikh Gurū, insists that complicated postures and difficult breathing have little to do with the inner search for God. (137) He acknowledges the health benefits that Hatha yoga offers but doubts their value, commenting that "the physical postures of the body end in death" (138) He notes that:

Yogis have performed all the eighty-four postures without gaining the ultimate goal. They do not rid the mind of erratic or vicious thoughts. They are primarily for the benefit of the physical body, and do not lead to God-Realization. These postures require sustained effort without much profit. Sant Mat, therefore, deprecates such practices. (139)

The Discipline of Surat Śabd Yoga

Surat Śabd Yoga is a secret technique. It involves a unique kind of initiation, special meditational techniques and esoteric knowledge not disclosed to the non-initiate. Only generalities have been provided for public consumption. For this reason the researcher has to be content with a limited amount of information. Nevertheless the Gurmat Siddhant does provide the reader with a general outline of Surat Śabd Yoga's initiation and meditational techniques. This provides us with some idea of what to associate Surat Śabd Yoga with.

As noted earlier (140) Surat Śabd Yoga has three basic elements apart from initiation. Each of these practices involves its own principle of connection with Śabd and consequently, God. One of these

elements represents the preliminary phase of achieving one-pointed attention. This discipline is called Simran (repetition, or more properly remembrance of the divine names). (141) There is also the practice of Dhyān (contemplation). (142) The third element of the yoga sadhana is Bhajan or the practice of listening to the celestial melody or Sabd. (143)

Initiation into the discipline of Surat Sabd Yoga is not generally disclosed but Babā Sawan Singh mentions the following about the initiation practice, choosing to call it "the gift of the Name" (144) and a new birth. (145) We are told that at the time of initiation:

The Master "injects", as it were, his consciousness and light into the soul of the disciple. This injection of His own consciousness and light permeates the disciple like leaven, and produces a new spiritual consciousness and light as the practice of Nam is continued. The spiritual light of the Master gives a new life to the soul of the disciple and begins to free it. Consequently, the disciple begins to have a feeling of fulfilment. This gift of the Master cannot be taken away. Time and Maya (illusion) cannot destroy this seed, this ray of life. The disciple, once initiated, will certainly progress, sooner or later. He will one day certainly reach his true Home. (146)

In Sant Mat it is believed that at the time of initiation the Satgurū imparts his life impulse to the initiate. The Satgurū then henceforth offers the initiate his protection provided the initiate submits himself unquestioningly to the will of the Satgurū and obeys his instructions. It is also believed that initiation guarantees the initiate eventual spiritual uplift leading one day to mystical union.

This idea of the Satgurū injecting his life impulse and the Śabd into the initiate is not a new one. In Tāntrism the dikṣā ceremony involves the transferring of jñāna-sākti (the dīkṣagurū's life force) to the initiate. (147)

The belief that the initiate receives a new spiritual consciousness during initiation is connected to the belief common among Tāntrikās that initiation is accompanied by receipt on the part of the devotee of the godly at the cost of the unclean. (148) There is also the possibility that Sant Mat initiation carries the same connotations as ātma samskāra. This Purāṇic term refers to the soul's purification as a result of the removal of the inner layers of ignorance at the time of initiation. (149)

Another idea present in Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of initiation is one which regards initiation as a new birth of the disciple. (150) In the Atharva Veda (XI, 5, 3), the upanayana ritual involves a three day ceremony in which the śiṣya is said to be given a new birth. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI, 5, 4) calls the initiated śiṣya, the "twice born" (dīva). The underlying factor of all these practices is that initiation brings with it the death of profane existence and the dawning of a new spiritual reality. (151)

We are also told something about the gurmantṛa or initiation mantra. This mantra is imparted to the disciple by the Satgurū at the time of initiation. It is done in a manner known only to those present. The gurmantṛa of the Puṇjāb branch is a sequence of five charged holy

Names. These Names are to be memorized, repeated mentally and as a rule never spoken aloud. The five Names used by the Pūñjāb branch are supposed to be the names of the ruling deities of the five cosmic regions, between the astral and pure spiritual regions. The Agro branch, however, insists that the correct gurmanttra is "Rādhāsvāmī", although Shiv Dayāl Singh spoke explicitly of "the Sumiran of the five Names". (152) However, irrespective of which names are used all parties agree that the gurmanttra of Rādhāsoāmī Mat is unique. (153)

The gurmanttra is also seen as being charged with the spiritual power of the Satgurū. It is this power that is said to open up new vistas of inner vision in the initiate. This belief probably has its origin in the Vedas. The Vedas state that the gurmanttra is that instrument which enables the sisya to experience the divine presence of the supreme Being via the initiating gurū. (154) In the Tāntric text Śiva saṃhitā (111.11) it is stated that it is the gurmanttra which provides the initiate with the true breath of life. (155) Bābā Sawan Singh's explains that the gurmanttra is charged in that it is:

the initiatory teaching imparted by the
Master to enable a disciple to reach his
original Home in the highest spiritual
regions. (156)

Extolling the importance of the gurmanttra Bābā Sawan Singh maintains with the same conviction as Gurū Arjan that its benefits are indescribable. (157) It is also the gurmanttra that enables the initiate to finally experience ultimate liberation from all worldly attachments. (158) It is during initiation that the initiate is introduced to the practice of Simran.

The definition of Simran that one finds in the Gurnat Siddhant reads as follows:

Simran is a Sanskrit word derived from the root "Smar". It has several meanings: To protect, to make a mental picture of one's deity in the heart, and to contemplate on this form, to remember a certain person or thing to such an extent as to think about it with every breath, to make it a part and parcel of one's life and ultimately to awaken into and to live in it. (159)

There is a possibility that this reference to "Smar" is actually a reference to the Sanskrit term smarana, meaning memorization. Smarana is often linked to the Nāth practice of Nām sumirana or Nām simrana, (160) both meaning "to remember the Name". Both these terms are associated with the popular Vaiṣṇava belief in the magical effect of voicing the divine Name.

In the Sant tradition Kabīr and Gurū Nānak repeatedly mention the practice of repeating the divine Name. For Kabīr, nām sumiran represents the internalization of the eternal permanence of God via the repetition of His Name. (161) Gurū Nānak sees Nām simran as "the meditation on the nature of God, on His qualities and His attributes as revealed in the Word". (162) This meditation forms the core of Gurū Nānak's spiritual discipline. The Name reveals the absoluteness of God. Repeating the divine Name then means recognizing the eternality of God. The practice of Nām simran, as Gurū Nānak sees it draws the devotee closer to God. Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of the term encompasses what has just been said about Kabīr and Gurū Nānak's understanding of the term. He sees Simran as the "ladder which

takes us to the higher regions where we may have communion with the Lord". (163)

In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition Simran refers specifically to the internal or silent repetition of the gurbantra. It carries the same meaning as the Tantric term ajapājapa. (164) Although Bābā Sawan Singh acknowledges that the oral repetition of the holy Names (165) does bring some benefit he is quick to point out that it is the internal practice of Simran that is more meaningful. He writes that:

The real Simran as taught by the Saints, is the most important part of Jap Yog (the Yoga of Repetition or Remembrance). And if it is done with the attention of the soul or with the tongue of the soul then the heart of that individual becomes attuned to the Lord. (166)

Internal Simran is important because he points out that:

the soul gives energy and life to the body, the mind and the senses, and by doing Simran with the soul, the mind concentrates. (167)

Simran, we are told can be done in any comfortable posture. It should be done with unwavering concentration and loving devotion. (168) It can be done any time though the preferred time dusk or dawn when the mind is said to be at peace and the spiritual vibrations the strongest. (169) Quoting a number of sources, Bābā Sawan Singh explains:

Night-time is particularly suited for Simran because of quiet and solitude. At this time the soul currents are not scattered. Dawn and dusk are times of

union (night with day and day with night),
and these times have a special spiritual
and magnetic power latent in them. (170)

The main aim of practising Simran is to keeping the fleeting mind under control, focusing it on God. This is the most important precondition for meaningful and successful meditation:

The Simran of the objects of the world
should be replaced by the Simran of God
and the thoughts of the world by Contemplation
of the Master, who is God incarnate. (171)

This emphasis on one-pointed attention is repeatedly found in the works of the Sants (172) and earlier on in Śabdapūrvayoga. In Śabdapūrvayoga smarana is a meditational exercise in which the mind is focused on the unity of the divine Word, and turned away from the diversity of thoughts and external sounds. (173)

Finally, Bābā Sawan Singh talks of the benefits that the practice of Simran brings with it. He praises Simran as being the "spiritual food of the soul". (174) He views it as an unfailing remedy for all ills, best described in his own words:

Simran banishes fear of death and frees
one from the cycle of births and deaths.
It removes obstacles and difficulties,
and pleasure and pain. Duality is shed,
the dross and filth of the mind wears off,
and the refulgence of God's Name becomes
manifest. The devotee is ever at the feet
of the Master. He gains glory in the Court
of the Lord and, crossing the ocean of
phenomena, he attains everlasting salvation. (175)

Another aspect of the discipline of Surat Śabd Yoga is the practice of Dhyān. It is stated in the Gurmat Siddhānt that:

Dhyan is a Sanskrit word derived from the root "Dhaye" which means to contemplate some form, to remember it, to repeat it, to think about it, and to collect the soul currents at their headquarters. Dhyan connotes both seeing and thinking. To fix the attention at any one point is called Dhyan. (176)

This definition is a composite one. In all likelihood Bābā Sawan Singh is trying to construct a definition which takes into account three main components of yogic contemplation techniques. The techniques referred to here are dhāraṇā or dhyāna (meditation), pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses) and ekāgratā (one-pointed attention).

In the Paṭanjali Sūtra the definition of dhāraṇā is given as follows:

In Dharana the flow of similar mental modifications on the same object is confined to the desired place. When (it) appears as an unbroken flow, then it is called Dhayana. (177)

This image of one-pointed contemplation also constitutes an important part of Rāmānuja's understanding of dhyāna. In his commentary to the Vedānta Sūtra it is stated that:

• Meditation (dhayana) is the steady remembrance, i.e. the continuity of steady remembrance, uninterrupted like the flow of oil in agreement with the spiritual passage that declares steady remembrance to be the means of release: on the attainment of remembrance all ties are loosened. Such remembrance is the same character (form) of seeing (intuition). (178)

Dhāraṇā is also associated with pratyāhāra. This is a discipline that involves the withdrawal of the senses from objects of the outer world.

It is aimed at mastering the sense organs. (179) The Yoga Sūtra of Patanjali states that pratyāhāra is:

the withdrawal (of the senses) as it were the imitation of the mind by the senses by means of communing with their objects. (180)

Dhāraṇā is also seen in conjunction with ekāgratā. This exercise aims at stimulating a continuous fixed concentration and censorship of all distractions that dominate sense consciousness. This exercise is useful in controlling the two generators of mental sense activity (indriya) of the subconscious (saṃskāra). (181) The Mahābhārata speaks of ekāgratā as being a concentration involving three distinct mental acts. These are disengagement of the mind from sense objects, reflecting and deliberating on the object chosen for meditation. (182)

Another point worth noting that in the Gurmat Siddhānt Dhyān is linked to the Sikh idea of "knowing and listening to the Shabd". (183) The notion of Dhyān being both seeing and knowing is indicative of the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh sees contemplation as seeing with the "eyes" and hearing with the "ears" of the soul. He explains that:

The soul has two faculties. One is "Surat", which means the hearing faculty, and the other is "Nirat", which means the seeing faculty. So long as the seeing faculty is not developed, mere listening to the Shabd does not bestow the fullest possible benefit. By fixing the attention within, one is able to behold many spiritual regions. So long as the seeing faculty does not develop, the hearing faculty of the soul does not ascend to higher planes.

By developing the seeing power of
the soul we achieve Dhyān. (184)

Bābā Sawan Singh sees Dhyān as one of the key pillars of the yoga sādhanā. He attaches great importance to contemplation which he conceives as the opening up of the inner recesses of the self to the presence of God as manifested in the Satgurū. Here again the theme of the divinity of the Satgurū re-emerges. At every possible opportunity the reader is reminded that the the Satgurū is Śabd incarnate. The following passage indicates this:

The highest form of Contemplation is that of God or connecting our consciousness with Shabd, which is God-in-Action, and listening to it is Contemplation of the person in whom God is manifest. The contemplation of God is impossible, for we have not seen Him. Therefore, we should first contemplate on the form of the Master, because we can see Him and by contemplating upon Him, we are enabled to contact Him. (185)

The idea that Dhyān is loving contemplation on the radiant form of the Satgurū is indicative of how it is weighted not only as a meditational technique but also as an instrument of devotion. We are not very far here from Rāmānuja who uses the terms bhakti (devotion), dhyāna (meditation) and vedana (worship) as synonyms. (186)

However, such a comparison is to be approached with caution for it is not without its pitfalls. We would do well to pay attention to what Ninian Smart has to say. He points out that there is a subtle difference between dhyāna and bhakti. Dhyāna, he states involves a

purification of consciousness, a kind of higher emptiness. Bhakti on the other hand, "feeds the apprehension of the numinous". He argues that devotion relies on contemplation (or meditation) but meditation can be self-sufficient. (187) For Bābā Sawan Singh, however, there can be no devotion without meditation and vice versa. Both are integral to the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga.

Finally we are told that Dhyān helps purify the soul, carries it to the higher inner planes, ultimately leading it to union in God:

Contemplation of the Masters is wondrously rewarding. Those who think of the Master's form gain honour and glory both here and beyond. All the desires are fulfilled. By merging in the Master, they attain God-realization. (188)

Another meditational practice of Surat Śabd Yoga is the practice of Bhajan which is considered to be the most difficult of the disciplines. The word, in Bābā Sawan Singh's usage, refers to an inverted focusing of attention and listening to the celestial sounds that emanate from the regions above the physical. Simran and Dhyān are said to lay the foundations for Bhajan, and initiates who are unsuccessful at Bhajan are often advised to concentrate first on either Simran or Dhyān or both. (189) Bhajan is defined in the following manner:

Bhajan simply means listening to the Sound Current, which is also termed by the Saints as Shabd Yog. This is done by the soul, or by its attention. It is through Surat or Soul that the Divine Melody is heard. (190)

The idea of a hearing faculty of the soul is a difficult one to grasp. It might be better understood if explained in the following manner. The soul (or soul-current) has the capacity of attaching itself on to Śabd during successful meditation. This awareness of the presence of Śabd is what is probably meant by the soul "hearing" the celestial sound current which reverberates throughout the universe.

Bhajan as it is carried out by initiates of the Rādhāsoāmī faith is by no means unique to this tradition. The practice does have historical antecedents. In the Maitrī Upaniṣad there is mention of a practice which seems similar to Bhajan though it does not carry the same name. Part of the passage in question reads:

By closing the ears with the thumbs they hear the sound of the space within the heart. There is the sevenfold comparison of it, like rivers, a bell, a brass vessel, a wheel, the croaking of frogs, rain, as when one speaks in a still place. Having passed beyond this variously characterised (sound), they disappear (become merged) in the supreme, the non-sound, the unmanifest Brahman. (191)

In the Lava-Yoga-Saṁhitā Tantra (II.21) a similar practice is mentioned:

One ought to close the ears, the eyes, the smelling organ and the mouth. In the shelter pure Sushumna then all the sounds be heard. (192)

We are unable to find any explanation for the use of the term Bhajan in the Gurmat Siddhānt. Loosely speaking, it is used in conjunction with the Vaiṣṇavite, Mahārāshtrian and Sikh practice of the singing of

devotional hymns. (193) Perhaps Bābā Sawan Singh wants to stress the sound element in this form of meditation. He therefore, relates it to bhajans which produce sounds when sung.

It is through the practice of Bhajan, we are told, that the soul's link with Śaod is established:

The Shabd Dhun permeates all beings
and by listening to it one becomes
a Saint. God's Name then dwells in
the heart and one is attuned to Him.
It is through the aid of Dhun that
the Soul merges in the Lord. (194)

Bhajan is also said to facilitate the effective and complete control of the mind. This in turn assures the initiate of his transcending the cycle of transmigration before experiencing mystical union:

When the mind listens to the Shabd
Dhun, it is completely enraptured
by the bliss that Dhun confers. One
who has joined his consciousness
with Dhun goes beyond the reach of
Kal, the negative Power, and this
ends the cycle of birth and rebirth. (195)

Strictly speaking Bhajan is the epitome of Surat Śabd Yoga. It is the very essence of the spiritual discipline leading to final salvation:

Listening to and merging in the Sound
of Nam or Shabd is the only means of
attaining Godhood, and this Sound is
constantly reverberating within the
forehead. It can only be heard only
through the company of Saints and by
following their instructions. (197)

Summary

This chapter outlined the main features of Surat Śabd Yoga as presented in the Gurmat Siddhānt. We began by explaining how Bābā Sawan Singh postulated the link between universal suffering and metaphysical ignorance. The influences of Patañjali and Advaita Vedānta were noted. Next we confirmed what Bābā Sawan Singh saw as true reality. He defined true reality as that which is uncovered when the soul is freed from the bondage of the mind. It is the attachment of the soul to the mind that is the cause of ignorance and in this context we learned about the fall of man in Rādhāsoāmī terms. We learned also how the fall of man was used to explain how the soul came to be bound to the mind and the material world.

In summarizing the main features of Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of mind we focused on the simplistic manner in which categories from Sāṃkhyan psychology were used. The mind-soul relationship involved the Sant belief that spiritual liberation was only possible if the soul was freed from the clutches of the mind.

We then examined the question of suffering and karma and enquired how the relationship between the two was perceived. We looked at Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of karma and the role of free will and noted that the influence of the Bhagavad Gītā was apparent.

In defining salvation as non-attachment Bābā Sawan Singh talked of freeing oneself from the attachments of the temporal world. We also

saw how salvation was linked to his ideas about the purpose of human life. Here we noted evidence of the influence of the Tāntric way of thinking being injected in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

The next section dealt with the philosophy of inner religion, the foundation of Surat Śabd Yoga. We explained how Surat Śabd Yoga was perceived as an inner spiritual state as opposed to an external form of worship. Our analysis centred on the concepts of anti-ritualism, turning inward and dying to the self.

We explained why this form of yoga was called the yoga of the celestial sound current by determining the etymology of the terms Surat and Nirat. We examined the view regarding the uniqueness of Surat Śabd Yoga and we evaluated how and why it was perceived to be different from all other forms of yoga.

In analyzing Nām initiation we centred our attention on Tāntric belief which as voiced by Bābā Sawan Singh states that initiation involves the injecting of the life force of the Satgurū into the initiate. The Vedic idea of initiation as being a process of purificatory second birth was also studied. Finally we noted the manner in which the role of the gurmanttra was conceived in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

Simran was defined as the remembrance and repetition of the divine names. We asked what this actually meant and what the functions of this practice were. We then proceeded to seek an understanding of the

term Dhyān, conceived of as contemplation of the inner radiant form of the Satgurū.

We also noted the similarities between Dhyān and the yogic practices of pratyāhāra and ekāgratā. Finally we looked at the technique of Bhajan. Having speculated on the use of the word we illustrated how it was understood to be a form of hearing meditation. We also emphasized its role as the central pillar of Surat Śabd Yoga meditation and demonstrated how it was portrayed as a crucial vehicle for linking the soul to the inner cosmic sounds.

NOTES

1. Bābā Sawan Singh does not develop his own 'universality of suffering' thesis. Neither does he address the problem directly. However, a familiarity with his works in general will confirm that he does accept the Buddhist and (according to some) Upaniṣadic belief that all existence is suffering. For a brief review of the Upaniṣadic view of universal suffering see G. Feurstein, "The Meaning of Suffering in Yoga", in G. Feurstein and J. Miller (eds.), A Reappraisal of Yoga. Essays in Indian Philosophy (London, 1971), p. 88.
2. Gurmat Siddhant Vol IV p. xxxviii. See also Vol. III p. 61.
3. From what Bābā Sawan Singh says about ignorance one is able to see certain general lines of congruence with Patañjali's concept of ignorance in his kleśa theory. Patañjali's kleśa theory is explained in Feurstein, "The Meaning of Suffering in Yoga", pp. 90-94.
4. Patañjali's theory of nescience is briefly examined in Feuerstein, "The Meaning of Suffering in Yoga", pp. 90-94.
5. For a brief survey of the avidyā concept in Advaita Vedānta see S. Bhattacharya's entry "Avidyā", in M. Eliade (ed. in chief), The Encyclopedia of Religion Vol 2 (New York, 1987), pp. 17-19.
6. For an exposition of Sāṃkhya's concept of bondage see M. S. Kumar, "Mukti And Bhakti As Highest Values", in Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy 2 (1963), p. 15. See also Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy Vol 1 pp. 238, 240 and 261.
7. Rāmānuja's view of bondage is examined by F. Vadakethala, "Yoga For Liberation: Rāmānuja's Approach", in Journal of Dharma 11 (1977), pp. 34 -52.
8. Letter to Dr. and Mrs. Brock dated July 21st. 1923. Quoted from Sat Sandesh 22 (1989), p. 33. See also Ratna Sagar pp. 23-25. (For an English rendition see Puri and Sethi, Tulsi Sahib. Saint of Hathras, p. 35).
9. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (138) p. 106. A highly stylized version of the fall by one of Bābā Sawan Singh's successors appears in D. Singh, Spiritual Awakening (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 100-113.
10. We see a striking resemblance here to Gurū Nānak's idea of salvation. Oliver observes that Gurū Nānak taught that salvation involves the redirecting of the mind away from its wordly orientation so as to make it the abode of God. See P. Oliver, The Nature of Salvation in Sikh Religion (M. Phil thesis, University of Leeds, 1985), p. 87.
11. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xx.
12. Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 278.

13. Discourses on Sant Mat, p. 274.
14. See Dasgupta, History of Indian Philosophy Vol I, pp. 25-26.
15. See for example, Chāndogya Upaniṣad VII (3.1).
16. For a definition of the Vedic concept of antaḥkarana see Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya-Sambandha. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis in Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 92, 100 and 140.
17. For an analysis of Gurū Nānak's concept of mind see McLeod, Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion pp. 178-181.
18. A definition of the yogic concept of mind as the "inner sense" appears in M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom (Princeton, 1969), p. 20. This idea also finds expression in the writings of the Rajab. See Callewaert, The Sarvaṅgī of the Dādūpanthī Rajab, p. 310.
19. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xi.
20. Gurū Nānak's view is expressed in Āsā Ast (8), Ādi Granth p. 415.
21. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. lxxv and Vol I p. xvi.
22. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I p. 44. Bābā Sawan Singh does not adhere strictly to the list of evil impulses found in the Sikh scriptures. This list consists of kām (lust), krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh, (attachment) and haṅkāṛ (pride).
23. Bābā Sawan Singh sticks to the English word ignorance. However, in the Hindi translation of the Gurmat Siddhānt, the Sanskrit term avidyā is used.
24. Patanjali's theory of the five states of consciousness is explained in R.S. Mishra, The Textbook of Yoga Psychology (New York, 1984), pp. 64-65.
25. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol IV p. 1.
26. Speaking of the fickleness of the mind, Arjuna says:

Fickle is the mind, impetuous, exceedingly strong: how difficult to curb it! As difficult as to curb the wind, I would say. (The Blessed Lord) Herein there is no doubt, hard is the mind to curb and fickle, but by untiring effort and by transcending passion it can be held in check.

(Quoted from R.C. Zaehner, The Bhagavad Gītā [6.34-5] [Oxford:Oxford, 1972], p. 424).

27. Kabīr for example, calls the mind a "nervous thief". See Bīak. 6ākhī 96.

28. Discourses on Sant Mat p. 272.

29. Discourses on Sant Mat p. 279.

30. Discourses on Sant Mat p. 274.

31. Discourses on Sant Mat p. 274-275.

32. What Bābā Sawan Singh is saying has often been voiced by the earlier Sants. Kabīr, for example, has this to say about the mind:

Mind never died, nor did maya, but the body
died a million times. Alas, mind's cravings
and expectations did not die, O Kabir.

(Translated as Kabir Granthavali 26:11 by Sethi,
Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 106).

33. This verse from Shiv Dayāl Singh would have most certainly inspired Bābā Sawan Singh. It reads:

So long as Surat does not catch hold of Dhun,
the mind cannot be subdued.

Unless the mind is subdued, salvation of the soul
is not possible. One will drift in the ocean of
the world for lives together.

Subdue your mind by the practice of Surat Shabd
Yoga. Adopt nor other method.

(Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoamī
Part II [Poetry] Bachan 24 Shabd 1 [91-93], p. 66).

34. Scott graphically describes how Kabīr warns of Yamā (the angel of death) seizing the manmukh (mind-centred individual), binding him and marching him off to the prison of karma-saṁsāra where he will continue to suffer the rounds of birth and death. See Scott, Kabir: Mystic and Maverick. The Religious Perceptions and Doctrines of a Medieval Indian Saint, p. 251.

35. In Sāṁkhya yoga there is mention of two classes of mind, the individual and the cosmic. In Sant Mat the cosmic mind is said to be reflection of Kāl Puruṣ (Negative Power), ruler of the causal plane and the planes below it.

36. See Mishra, The Textbook of Yoga Psychology p. 62.

37. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 18.

38. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 25.

39. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I p. 21.

40. In actual fact the verse is Suhi M 1 Suchajji (2), Adi Granth p. 763 which reads:

When Thou art with me, I attain everything: O
Lord, art
my Master, my Capital-stock.
When Thou Abidest within me, I am at Peace:
Blessed am
I when Thou Abidest within me.
If such be Thy Will, Thou makest me king or a
beggar,
detached from the world.
If such be Thy Will, the Seas will surge in the
(heart's) Desert, and the Lotus will bloom
in the Sky (of the Mind).
In Thy Will, do we cross the Sea of Existence, in
Thy
Will is our Lord sunk in the mid-stream.
In Thy Will, do I find Thee a Colourful Person and
then
I am Imbued with Thy Praise, O treasure of
Virtue!
In Thy Will, Thou seemest Dreadful to me, and I am
bound to the cycle of coming and going.
O Lord, Thou art Unfathomable Unweighable; saying
of Thee, I Surrender to Thee.
What shall I ask, pray, what shall I utter, save
that I Hunger and Thirst for Thee.
Through the Guru's Word I Attain unto the Lord,
and for this alone do I Pray to my God.

41. The other verse is given as Sorth Mah 1,8, 59-8-19. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 31.

42. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 27.

43. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 31.

44. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I p. 31.

45. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 22. Here he speaks of a "fathomless" ocean of karmas.

46. For an analysis of karma and free will in the Bhagavad Gita see S. Arvind, "Fate and Free Will in the Bhagavadgītā", in Religious Studies 15 (1979), pp. 531-537.

47. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 33.

48. The manner in which the four goals of life are conceived of in Hindu philosophy is outlined in M.S. Kumar, "'Mukti' And 'Bhakti' As Highest Values", p. 14.

49. Gurmat Siddhant Vol I p. 6.

50. There are several ways in which the term has been used in Indian thought. Generally it stands for religious observance, righteousness, justice, sense of duty and social order etc. All these uses relate in some way to the root dhri. See B. Kuppuswamy, Dharma and Society. A Study in Social Values (New Delhi, 1977), pp. 17 and 20.

51. By comparing Bābā Sawan Singh's list to the one found in the Yoga Sūtras we notice that he has omitted a number of yamas (restraints) and niyamas (observances). Among the restraints left out are astiya (non-stealing), dhrti (steadiness), ājāva (straightforwardness). The observances that have been omitted are santosa (contentment), svādhyāya (study of and repetition of the scriptures) and prāṇidhana (devotion to God). However, an amended list is provided on page 41 (Vol. I) of the Gurmat Siddhant. For an explanation of the role of yama and niyama in Aṣṭāṅga yoga see Feuerstein, "The Essence of Yoga", pp. 15-24.

52. Yama and niyama are discussed in Book II 30, 32, 33, and 35 of Patanjali's Yoga Sūtras.

53. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 7. A more accurate translation would be "material well-being".

54. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 7.

55. Gurmat Siddhant Vol I p. 7.

56. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I pp. 7-8.

57. Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of salvation as deliverance from the condition of bondage is similar to the one found in the Vedānta Sūtras I.1, II.1., and 15 iii. Similar ideas also receive mention in the Bhagavad Gītā (II.3) and Maitrī Upaniṣad (VI.25). Brief notes on the mentioned passages appear in A.S. Geden's entry "Salvation (Indian)", in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol 11 (Edinburgh, 1934), pp. 132-135.

58. Gurmat Siddhant Vol V p. xxxix.

59. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad III. 8. Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads p. 727.

60. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xliii. See also S. Singh, "The Purpose of Life", in Sat Sandesh 23 (1987), p. 33 for a statement to the same effect.

61. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 61. In Tāntrism it is believed that it is only within the living human body that the liberating experience of

spiritual bliss can occur. The body is looked on as a precious gift, not to be squandered for it comes only once. See Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, pp. 218-219 and Vaudeville, Kabir Vol I p. 126.

62. The verse Asa M 5 Dupadas (1) of the Adi Granth p. 379 reads:

Thou hast obtained from thy God a human's body,
Now alone is the time to attain thy Lord.
Of no avail are thy other works;
Join the Society of the Saints and utter nought
but the Lord's Name.

63. See for example, Kabir Granthnavali sākhī 115 and Kabir Śabdāvalī I:38 and II:10. (English translations of the last two verses appear in Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 210).

64. See for example, Śabdāvalī Part I Kundlī 13, p. 13 and Part I Sorath 2, p. 87. (The English versions of the passages cited appear in Puri and Sethi, Tulsi Sahib. Saint of Hathras, pp. 32 and 100-101 respectively).

65. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 11.

66. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 14. Similar sentiments are expressed in the Adi Granth. (Suhī M 4 (1-3), p. 723).

67. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (121) p. 101. See also Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry), Bachan 24 Shabd 1 (14-15), p. 29.

68. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I p. 14. The Rādhāsoāmī tradition seems to have adopted the Upanisadic teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā (IV.7) which declares that the Divine incarnates Himself at crucial times in human history.

69. W.D. O'Flaherty (ed.), Karma and Rebirth in the Classical Indian Tradition (New Delhi, 1983), p. 41 for a translation of verse 4,24 (pp 25-26) of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

70. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xiii.

71. This definition in the Yoga Yainavalkyal (1.44) is quoted in K.S. Joshi, "On the Meaning of Yoga", in Philosophy East and West 15 (1965), p. 58. A similar concept appears in Sāṃkhyan philosophy. It is called asam prajñata samādhi (higher union with Brahman). See Mishra, The Textbook of Yoga Psychology, p. 79.

72. See Joshi, "On the Meaning of Yoga", p. 59.

77. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p xi. A similar view is expressed by Shiv Dayāl Singh. See Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry) Bachan 38 (Bhadon), p. 377.

78. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 1. See also Vol IV p. lxxx.

79. Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry) Bachan 26 Question 3 (Preface), p. 100. See also Question 3 Parts I-VII, pp. 100-109 of the same volume.

80. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part I (38) p. 45.

81. Kabīr's contempt for rituals has been analyzed by Scott, Kabīr: Maverick and Mystic. The Religious Perceptions and Doctrines of a Medieval Indian Saint, pp. 280-287. See also Kabīr Granthāvalī 100:136. (An English translation of these verses appears in Sethi, Kabir The Weaver of God's Name, p. 291).

82. Gurū Nānak's critique of the practices of the Kanpatha yogīs has been extensively studied by W.O. Cole, The Attitude of Gurū Nānak and Early Sikhism to Indian Religious Beliefs and Practices 1469-1708 (Ph.D thesis, University of Leeds, 1979), pp. 112-118.

83. See for example, Rānkali M 1 : Ashtapadis (5-6), Ādi Granth p. 903.

84. See for example, Māru M 2 (12-14), Ādi Granth p. 1043.

85. See for example, Bhairo M 1 (1-8), Ādi Granth p. 1127.

86. See for example, Shaloka Sahaskriti M 1 (1-4), Ādi Granth p. 1353.

87. See for example, Sorath M 5 (1-4), Ādi Granth p. 623.

88. Bābā Sawan Singh actually uses the phrase "temple of God" (see Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. xxv), often associated with Gurū Nānak. Like Gurū Nānak, he sees the body as a field in which the seed of Nām is to be sown. In Sorath M 1 (1), Ādi Granth p. 595 we read:

Let thy Mind be the Farmer, Good Deeds the
farming and thy body the farm: And let Effort.
(in the way of God) irrigate thy farm.
Let the Lord's Name be the seed, and Contentment
the furrowing, and let the fence be of Humility.
And, if thou dost Deeds of Love, thy Seed will
sprout and fortunate will then be thy Home.

89. Katha Upanisad II 1.1. reads:

The Self is not to be sought through
the senses. The Self-caused pierced
the openings (of the senses) outward;
therefore one looks outward and not
within oneself. Some wise man, however,
seeking the life eternal, with his eyes
turned inward, saw the self.

(Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 630).

90. Among the Sants there is general agreement that the human body houses the ultimate Truth. Tulsī Sahib, for example calls the human body "the palace within, where the saints revel". See Ratna Sāgar, p. 151 for example.
91. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. xxv. See also Vol III p. 8.
92. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 104.
93. S. Singh, "The Elixir", in: Sat Sandesh 20 (1987), p. 27.
94. Another Sant term used is ulaṭī-chāla (backward gait). The Dādū-panthī Rajab speaks of "walking backwards" (Sarvāṅgī 24-9). In Rādhāsoāmī literature there is talk of "the opposite current".
95. For a brief analysis of the Sant interpretation of "going within" by the Kabīr scholar Vaudeville see "Kabīr and Interior Religion", p. 106.
96. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 99.
97. An excellent summary of the practice of pratyāhāra in Aṣṭāṅga yoga is presented by Steinmann in his revised doctoral thesis. See Gurū-Siṣya Sambandha. Das Meister Schüler-Verhältnis in Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, p. 104.
98. Other terms used in the Gurmat Siddhānt are "Tenth Lane" and "Tenth Gate". See Vol. I p. xvi. The third eye receives repeated mention by the Sants. Kabīr uses the term "hidden door" (see Kabīr Sabdāvalī 1:64). Gurū Nānak prefers dasam dūr (the tenth door) (see Maru Solaha 13 [1]).
99. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxxix. See also p. 110 of the same volume and p. lxxii of Vol. IV.
100. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. xl-xli.
101. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xl.
102. This idea is popular among the Sants. Tukārām (Abhang Gatha, 2669) speaks of "experiencing death in this world". Kabīr mentions "living death", (Kabīr Granthāvalī sakhī 11) Gurū Nānak calls it "dying to the self" (Āsā Chhant 2 [3], Adi Granth p. 431).
103. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 110.
104. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 111.
105. Barthwal for instance, devotes more than twenty pages to Śabda Yoga but has literally nothing to say about its history. See Barthwal,

The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism. pp. 131-152.

106. Eliade refers briefly to the yoga of the mystical sounds in the Pali canon Digha-nikaya (1.152) and also the Mahanirvanatantra (1.46). He also briefly mentions the Hathayogapradīpikā (IV [79]) and the Gheranda Samhitā (verse 78ff). See Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p. 390.

107. Shiv Dayāl Singh's teachings on Surat Śabd Yoga appear in Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rāchāsāmī Part I (Poetry), chapter 29, pp. 381-517 under the heading "The Practice of Surat Shabd Yoga".

108. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xiv.

109. See for example, Yoga Sūtra 111. 1 (1), 111. 2 (1), 11. 54 (1) and 11.55 (1). Steinmann explains dharana in Guru-Sisya-Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 104-105 (footnote 50).

110. Useful information of the Kanpatha yogis and their variant of Hatha yoga appears in Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, pp. 211-235.

111. For a study of Sahaj yoga as practised by the Buddhist Sahajiyas see Das Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, pp. 83-94.

112. Suratī-śabda yoga is mentioned in Callewaert, The Sarvāṅgī of the Dadūpanthī Rājā pp. 323-325.

113. For an interpretation of the yoga of Gurū Nānak see Cole, "Guru Nanak and the Gorakhnathis", pp. 189-192.

114. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 52.

115. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 52.

116. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 52.

117. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 52.

118. See Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, pp. 295-295.

119. See Vaudeville, Kabīr Vol. I p. 135. Refer also to J. Dwyer, Bhakti in Kabīr (Patna, 1981), p. 239 for a similar explanation.

120. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 93.

121. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxvi.

122. These two disciplines will be discussed later on in this chapter in separate sections.

123. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I pp. 92 -93. The superiority of Surat Sabd Yoga is proclaimed by Shiv Dayāl Singh in Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry) Bachan 23 Shabd 1 (1-85), pp. 47-56. Bābā Sawan Singh uses a similar line of argument. Shiv Dayāl Singh's argument is built around the belief that only Surat Sabd Yoga can facilitate spiritual development at the planes beyond the causal.
124. There is no such practice as "Pran Yoga". Prāṇāyama is one component of Hatha yoga.
125. F.J. Bubba in his book entitled The Paradox of Instruction (San Francisco, 1977) introduces the categories "subtle path of yoga" (i.e. higher yoga) and "gross path of yoga" (i.e. lower yoga). See p. 141.
126. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. xvi - xvii.
127. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part II (176), p. 120.
128. We have Kirpal Singh, one of Bābā Sawan Singh's successors, to thank for introducing Surat Sabd Yoga as the yoga of the celestial sound current. One of his books is entitled Surat Shabd Yoga. The Yoga of the Celestial Sound (Berkeley, 1975).
129. In Tāntrism, Kāyā-sādhana is viewed as a means of attaining Kāyā-siddhi (perfection of the body). For a discussion of the role of body culture in Tāntrism see Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p. 227.
130. Kuṇḍalinī śakti is the cosmic energy conceived as a female snake ("the coiled One"). It is said to be coiled in the lowest Cakra where it remains in a dormant state.
131. For details of Tāntric esoteric physiology see N.N. Bhattacharya, History of the Tantric Religion: A historical, ritualistic and philosophical study, (New Delhi, 1982), p. 282. Refer also to Vaudeville, Kabir Vol. I pp. 130-133. Another valuable source of information is Steinmann, Guru-Sisya Sambandha. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 104-106.
132. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 53. See also Vol I p. xxxv. A similar view is expressed by Shiv Dayāl Singh in Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part II (Poetry) Bachan 38 (1-16), pp. 394-395.
133. S. Singh, Sār Bachan Part I (34), p. 42.
134. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxxvi. See also p. xxxv of the same volume.
135. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. xiv-xvii.
136. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xvii. For a study of Gurū Nānak's critique Nāth yogī rituals and practices see Cole, "Guru Nanak and the Gorakhnathis", pp. 188-195.

137. Gurū Nānak's definition of Nām Yoga is to be found in Māru M. 1 (1-11) Ādi Granth p. 992.
138. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I pp. 40 and 44.
139. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 42.
140. See chapter II note 45 of this study.
141. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxi.
142. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxi.
143. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxiv.
144. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 18.
145. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 18.
146. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 18.
147. See Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambandha. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, p. 102. The function of initiation in Tāntrism is outlined in the Kulārvaṇa Tantra XIV (3-4, 91-97). Details of the Tāntric initiation ceremony are disclosed in J.G. Woodroffe, The Great Liberation (Madras, 1971), p. 288.
148. Bruck explains that etymologically speaking "da" means "to give" and "ksi" means "to destroy". He then interpretes dīkṣa (initiation) to mean "to give the godly and destroy karmic residues". See M. von Bruck, "Zum Verständnis des Guru", in Zeitschrift für Missionen 13 (1987), p. 13.
149. See Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambandha. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus p. 103 for further details on ātma saṁskāra. See also Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I p. 23.
150. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 18.
151. See Gonda, Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, p. 316.
152. See Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoṁī Part II (Poetry) Bachan 26 Answer 4 (156) p. 109.
153. See S. Singh Sār Bachan Part I (186) p. 127.
154. See J. Gonda, "The Indian Mantra", in Oriens 16 (1963), p. 255.
155. See Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambandha. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, p. 103.
156. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. 15.

157. Bābā Sawan Singh quotes Gurū Arjan to substantiate his claim. The verse in question runs as follows:

Cursed is he and ill-spent is his life,
Who has not obtained the Guru Mantra.
He is like a dog, crow or swine;
Like an ass or snake is he.

(Quoted as M 5 Sahaskriti 1356-19 in Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 16).

158. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 16. In some Rādhāsoāmī circles there is talk of the gurmantra being the "key to true redemption" (sachhā uddhār) and "the supreme sacred utterance" (param mantra). See Babb, Redemptive Encounter. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition, p. 51.

159. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. 45-46. He also sees Simran as the practice of "remembering the Lord with every breath of our life". (Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxi).

160. For a discussion of the concept of nām sumirana in the Nāth tradition and its consequent use by the early Sants see Barthwal, The Nirguna School Of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, pp. 122-131.

161. See for example, Kabīr Granthāvalī pad 20.

162. See McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 295-296.

163. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxv.

164. Ajapājāpa is called the "unuttered prayer" by Rajab. For details see Callewaert, The Sarvāngī of the Dādūpanthī Rajab, p. 330. See also chapter I of this study.

165. For a listing of the various methods of practising Simran see Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. 50-51.

166. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxxiv.

167. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxi. See also p. 49 of the same volume.

168. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxiv.

169. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 36.

170. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 70. Bābā Sawan Singh speaks of these times as the "Time of Elixir" (Amrit Velā). See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol I pp. 34-40.

171. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 48. See also pp xxiii-xxiv of the same volume.

172. See for example, Dādū Bānī 1.114, 128.
173. In Śabdapūrvayoga'smāraṇa is a practice in which the mind is fixed on the unity of the divine Word and the sounds it emanates. See Coward "The Yoga of the Word (Śabdapūrvayoga)", pp. 9-10.
174. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 59.
175. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 73.
176. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 73.
177. Patañjali Yoga Sūtra Book III 2. Quoted from Swāmī H Aranya (translated by P.N. Mukerji), Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali (Albany, 1983), p. 251.
178. Quoted from Vedakethala, "A Yoga For Liberation: Rāmānuja's Approach", p. 49. Refer also to G. Thibaut, The Vedānta Sūtras with commentary of Rāmānuja (Sacred Books of the East Vol xlviii [Oxford, 1964]), pp. 14-15.
179. See Steinmann, Gurū-Śiṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus p. 104, (footnote 50).
180. Quoted from Feuerstein, "The Essence of Yoga", p. 29.
181. See for example, Bhagavad Gītā 8:10.
182. See 188. 5-10. A commentary of the passage appears in M. Dhavamony, "Hindu Meditation", in: Studia Missionaria 25 (1976), p. 124.
183. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 73.
184. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I pp. 79-80.
185. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 77.
186. See Rāmānuja's Śrībhāṣya I. I. I. and Gītābhāṣya 6. 34.
187. N. Smart, The Yogi and the Devotee: the Interplay between the Upanishads and Catholic Theology, (London, 1968), p. 36.
188. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 88..
189. See Gurmat Siddhānt pp. xxxi, 92 and 96.
190. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 92.
191. Maitrī Upaniṣad VI 22. Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 833.

192. Quoted from Barthwal, The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry. An Exposition of Medieval Indian Santa Mysticism, p. 15.

193. In Maharashtra, for example, the bhajan is related to the repetition of God's name. The practice is called nāmasamkīrtan nāmagayār (resounding of the name). See C Kiehnle, "A Vārakerī Bhajan Programme: Elements And Structure, Text and Translation", in M. Thiel-Horstmann (ed.), Bhakti in Current Research 1979-1982 (Berlin, 1983), p. 200.

194. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 98.

195. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 97.

196. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxxiii.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCEPT OF BHAKTI IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

In the previous chapter we examined Bābā Sawan Singh's views on Surat Śabd Yoga as the practical instrument for the attainment of spiritual liberation. This chapter will look at the correct devotional attitude that must accompany that practice if it is to be successful.

Bābā Sawan Singh views bhakti as a specific religious attitude and sentiment. Its essential features are faith in, love for and thoughtful surrender and service to God and the Satguru. Bhakti is defined as an affective participation of the devotee's soul in the divine nature of God. Bābā Sawan Singh holds that God cannot be realized by knowledge alone. To his mind it is the love of God that is the essential and most efficacious means of realizing Him.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt bhakti figures prominently as the ultimate expression of love. This love is seen as inherent in man and permeating the entire universe. It is the eternal quality of God and is embedded in the consciousness of the true devotee providing him with a variety of spiritual benefits.

The process of bhakti that governs the God-devotee relationship is said to begin with the devotee becoming increasingly aware of his

finitude vis a vis the infinitude and majesty of God. As the devotee is gradually drawn into a more intimate relationship with God he develops an intense longing for Him. While longing for mystical union the devotee also suffers the pangs of separation from his Beloved.

Bābā Sawan Singh presents bhakti within the framework of a relational view of reality. He seeks to establish that it is of primary importance that the devotee develop a loving relationship with and self-surrender to the Satgurū.

Reference to gurūsevā in the Gurmat Siddhānt indicates a kind of spiritual service performed in loving devotion to the Satgurū. It is seen in conjunction with the concepts of divine grace, selfless surrender and detachment. Bhakti on the other hand is seen as man's loving response to divine grace upon which his salvation ultimately depends. Selfless surrender is recognized as the act of refuge taking, a kind of submission to the divine will. Detachment is viewed as a single-minded identification with God and an indifference to all that is antagonistic to Him.

When we examine the components that constitute Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of bhakti we find that it involves appraising what he has to say about the etymology of the term bhakti. We recognize what has been said about bhakti as God-centredness and the highest path of God-realization and we realize that we are involved here with an analysis of what is termed Nām bhakti.

Concerning prema bhakti or the bhakti of love and what is said about love being the essence of bhakti, we note that in the Gurmat Siddhant love is presented as a current of attraction that draws the devotee towards God. The view is expressed that prema bhakti is a path of emotion, accompanied by awe and affection for a loving and compassionate God. It is the path of loving surrender heightened by a sense of nearness to God. This condition in Bābā Sawan Singh's eyes, brings with it innumerable benefits to the true devotee. It is in this active state of love and devotion that the painful longing for God arises. In the Gurmat Siddhant the term bireh is used to describe this state of painful longing in separation.

The Definition of Bhakti

Bābā Sawan Singh's treatment of the etymology of the term bhakti is the conventional one. He relates bhakti to its common Sanskrit verbal root bhaj. (1) However, in doing this he focuses exclusively on only one meaning of this root, namely service, and chooses to ignore the other connotations normally associated with the term. In doing so he deprives the reader of a chance to capture the etymological and semantic richness of the term bhakti.

Research has shown that the term bhakti and its root bhaj carry with it a variety of meanings. These include "to deal out", "apportion", "divide", "share", "allot", "partake in", "resort to", "to serve", "honor", "revere", "love" and "adore". (2)

It has been suggested that the term bhakti originally applied to offerings allotted or apportioned to the deity. Out of such practices more emotional meanings became dominant, and ultimately bhakti developed into a generic term indicating a relationship with a deity to whom the devotee felt drawn. (3) In its religious usage it specifically means choosing God and worshipping, adoring and loving Him. Initially it was used in the sense of mechanical participation in a sacrificial rite. (4) In later Hindu devotional literature, however, it was very often used to express the personal relationship between the devotee and God. (5)

Dhavamony draws to our attention the fact that as a religious term bhakti is not easy to translate. It possesses a variety of doctrinal and affective connotations. Of these the most frequent to be found in bhakti literature are "godward love in utter self-surrender", "participation in the divine", and "loving devotion". (6) Bhakti is also often used for sharing and participation, when used with regard to persons and indicates a certain communion of mind and heart. In the Gurmat Siddhant Bābā Sawan Singh points out that :

To give one's love and attachment to the Deity is called devotion. In other words unceasing attention and love coming from the heart of a person for a spiritually advanced and noble soul is termed devotion. (7)

What Bābā Sawan Singh has done here is to focus on love and use it as a basis for his understanding of bhakti. In so doing he relates bhakti to the path of bhakti yoga (the discipline of loving devotion). The other compounds of the term bhakti which usually include bhakti namra

(bent down in devotion, making obeisance), bhakti mat (devout, loyal pious devotion), bhakti viśiṣṭa (distinguished by devotion), bhakti vāda (declaration of love) and bhakti bhaj (possessing true devotion) (8) are not mentioned in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

Clearly Bābā Sawan Singh sees bhakti as a response to God through loving devotion involves a certain intimacy between the devotee and God. Although he does not use the terminology of the Nārada Sūtra (9) the tone of Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of bhakti does seem to suggest a certain familiarity with the text. It also suggests an understanding of bhakti as anurakti or an affection which arises out of genuine love of the adorable One. (10)

Bābā Sawan Singh writes as a strict monotheist. He conceives of God as a supreme unique Person. This is in keeping with the mainstream of bhakti religion which proposes a single-minded and undivided love for the supreme Being. The God that the devotee is to attach himself to and who comes and dwells in him is a God who is good, gracious and merciful. He is the friend of every being and saves them from misery. He reveals Himself to them by His grace and helps them surmount all obstacles, thus delivering eternal peace and salvation. The following quotation indicates this point:

Devotion is a quality by which the soul rises upwards and attains communion with God. Thus God is attracted downwards towards the devotee and comes and dwells within him. (11)

Here God is conceived as the One who eminently attracts the devotee to a loving communion with Him and the devotee in return is seen as putting his earthly life to its best use by forever transcending this world. This experience is described as intoxicating:

The task of devotion is intoxicating. It attracts the mind and creates a condition of intoxicating bliss, which cannot be described either by pen or tongue. It is beyond description. Its taste is the prerogative of the soul alone. (12)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt we have a conception of bhakti that equates devotion with an intuitive, direct experience of God. Bābā Sawan Singh is prone to speaking of "dwelling in the heart of God" (13) which involves a realization of the true nature of God. He views bhakti as the soul contacting Nām by means of concentration and "remaining happy in the enjoyment of Nam". (14)

This idea of bhakti as experiencing God which recurs in Bābā Sawan Singh's writing appears throughout Hindu literature. In the Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad, for example, we read of the individual soul being in bondage, impotent and sorrowful because it does not know its true nature. It is only through bhakti that the embodied soul is released from its bonds, becomes immortal and attains eternal peace and happiness. (15) Liberation is seen as being the end result of knowing God. The following passage states this clearly:

Even as a mirror stained by dust shines brightly when it has been cleaned, so the embodied one when he has seen the (real) nature of the Self becomes integrated, of fulfilled purpose and freed from sorrow.

When by means of the (real) nature of his self he sees as by a lamp here the (real) nature of Brahman, by knowing God who is unborn, steadfast, free from all natures, he is released from all fetters. (16)

In the Bhagavad Gītā bhakti is conceived by some commentators to be the way to realize the ultimate goal. Liberation is seen as being best realized by meditating on the true nature of God. It is through the participation in the divine nature of God that one is able to attain a state of union with God. By bhakti again the liberated soul realizes God's true nature, i.e., the devotee knows God as he is in Himself.

(17) A close examination of Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of bhakti would confirm that he would not dispute this.

In Rāmānuja's writings the terms dhyāna, upāsana and bhakti are depicted as being interchangeable. There are many instances that illustrate this identification between meditation and the love of God.

(18) Meditation is viewed as being an immediate vision of God bestowed upon the devotee whom He loves. The devotee on his part must be devoted to God, adore Him and lovingly surrender himself to Him. Bhakti here means 'participation in God and it is meditation that effects this participation. (19) Bābā Sawan Singh adheres to the same principle by repeatedly advocating that the practice of Nam meditation which is in effect loving devotion to God.

Both Rāmānuja and Bābā Sawan Singh agree that direct perception of God is meaningless if not accompanied by adoring love and complete self-surrender to the workings of the divine will. Both believe that it is

God's creativity, omnipotence and omnipresence that allow for the possibility of a devotional relationship with Him. It is the fact that He is the creator of the universe that explains why all souls spring from Him and why they should return to Him in loving devotion.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt this belief is presented in the form of five theological presuppositions, termed principles of devotion. (20) The most important of these relate to God's transcendence and immanence. (21) Bābā Sawan Singh writes:

The first principle underlying devotion is that God is the Creator of all and is omniscient. Human beings, the lower species of life, and in fact the entire universe are a sign of His existence. (22)

Bābā Sawan Singh does not see God's transcendence as excluding any relation with the world. He repeatedly asserts that God is not only transcendent but also immanent. God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe; he is its beginning, middle and end. (23) God is seen as immanent in all beings. He dwells in the hearts of men as the essence of all things. He takes upon Himself all forms and yet is unaffected by the imperfections of the phenomenal world.

Bābā Sawan Singh also sees bhakti as being the highest path of salvation, an idea somewhat similar to those who speak of sādhyā bhakti (bhakti as the ultimate end). His reference to this form of bhakti occurs in the form of a passage loosely quoted from Tulsi Dās:

Bhakti is complete in itself and is not dependent on any other practice. On the other

hand knowledge and detachment are dependent upon it. (24)

In the Bhagavad Gītā (25) and the Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad (26) one finds references to sādhya bhakti as the yoga of integration. It is that final state of perfection in which the devotee consciously experiences the unity of all creation by being grounded in God (27). Similarly for Bābā Sawan Singh the true devotee is one who sees the Lord everywhere and in everything. (28)

According to the Gurmat Siddhānt love, service, and surrender to God constitute salvation. This is in keeping with general Hindu belief. Hinduism in general seeks to find out the way for the embodied soul to return to its source and ultimate ground either in identity with or in union with God. What for the Hindu constitutes salvation is release from the human condition of karma and suffering into a condition of loving surrender and devoted service to God.

As briefly stated above in the quotation from Tulsī Dās, Bābā Sawan Singh does differentiate between the path of devotion and that of knowledge. He repeatedly reminds us that it is the path of devotion that really matters and asserts that:

All observances, except devotion, viz, Karma (Actions), Gyan (Knowledge) and Yoga (Discipline) are performed with some effect. In devotion one has to seek only the support of God. So long as one depends on anything other than God, the temple of our mind (human body) does not become fit for God to enter. (29)

Referring to the Bhagavad Gītā he reiterates that bhakti is the supreme goal of life:

In the Gita there is mention of Gyan Marg (the path of knowledge) and of Bhakti Marg (the path of devotion) for attaining communion with God. But as already mentioned Lord Krishna has already given preference to devotion. (30)

Bābā Sawan Singh firmly supports the dictum that salvation is only for those who bear the greatest love for God. He also supports the view put forward in the Bhagavad Gītā concerning liberation as "going to the divine Spirit" in loving submission (31). The Bhagavad Gītā talks of a penetrating into God's (in this case Kṛṣṇa's) supreme abode and entering into His substance. (32) It is what Zaehner calls "the felt participation of the soul in the total being of God". (33) Bābā Sawan Singh would put it no differently.

The Concept of Prem

The central ingredient of bhakti for Bābā Sawan Singh is prem or love. It is love directed towards a formless God. It is that vital response of the devotee in whom has been awakened a longing for union with the Beloved. There can be no doubt for Bābā Sawan Singh that contemplation arouses in the devotee a love of God of the highest kind. It is a notion based on the belief that pure love is that which centres around the eternal and divine core of God. It involves the recognition that the final expression of love is God-realization, achieved through a union in love between the devotee and God.

Responding to the question about the meaning of the term prem, Bābā Sawan Singh explains:

The meaning of Prem (Love) is the merging of one's self into the object of love. It has a wonderful attraction, or strong pulling power. The word "prem" is derived from the Sanskrit "pre", which means a thing that pleases the heart and attracts it. (34)

This definition is in accordance with the general understanding of the term prem. The word prem is a derivative of the Sanskrit root pri (and not pre as the Gurmat Siddhānt suggests). It means "to please", "to gladden", "to enjoy", "to be refreshed" and "to be comforted". Prem is generally rendered as love which is often associated with its pleasurable aspects. (35) In the Gurmat Siddhānt, however, prem is used in the spiritual sense of the term. By spiritual love is meant love which is stimulated by the spiritual affinity that exists between the devotee and God. Contrary to sensual love it is not generated by the desire for corporeal lust. It could be said that spiritual love is the devotional expression of a highly evolved soul whereas carnal love is that of a sensuous being.

The single most important factor for developing spirituality as Bābā Sawan Singh sees it, is the cultivation of love for God. This love is difficult to describe. It is a delicate feeling beyond the intellect. It is also viewed as the basis of life. It is that cosmic force which is the key to the mystery of God. Bābā Sawan Singh has this to say of love:

Love is the life-stream of this world and is

also the essence of our Life. It is the very core of purity and simplicity. Without it, the whole world is empty. It is the elixir which keeps life in full bloom. (36)

Love for him is the theological essence of God. Love is the core of God's divine personality. It is the foundation of God's divine attributes, both within Himself and in relation to the world. Because love is God's innermost essence all actions that He performs spring from His loving care for His creatures. He fills all created intelligence with His love. The Gurnat Siddhant teaches that where there is love, there is God, and where there is God there is love. God and love are treated as convertibles. The following passage states this clearly:

God is Love. God is also Nam and Shabd (Sound Current, Word). In other words, Love is the treasure of Nam and it contains the most powerful elixir by obtaining which all our evil tendencies are destroyed. (37)

Bābā Sawan Singh sees love as the essence of God before and after the act of creation. Love appears also as the expression of the divine will to create. The entire universe is seen as being charged with God's love. We find this idea being expressed in the following passages:

Prior to the creation of the world God was a vast ocean like All-Consciousness. He was all love, all bliss and self-sufficient. God was everything in Himself and was in a state of blissful quiescence, and His basic form was Love. It was not love for any other being, because none existed. It was for Himself. It was part and parcel of Himself, and He did not have to depend on anything else for this. Such is the indescribable condition of Love. (38)

God is Love, and love was in the beginning.
The entire creation is the result of love.
We have been sent down in this world through
love, and the cause of our return will be love.
(39)

Man has been created in the image of God,
and God is Love. Therefore His quality of
love is predominant in the world. Because
man possesses the quality of love within
himself, the entire universe, which also
contains strong currents of love, is
constantly attracting man towards it. (40)

Bābā Sawan Singh's idea that love is the essence of creation bears a
striking resemblance to the one put forward by the great tenth century
Sūfī martyr Āl-Hallāj. Hallāj too proclaims that the essence of God is
love. He also speaks of God being in Himself before the act of
creation. Āl-Hallāj describes God as being then in a state of absolute
love. God was seen as revealing Himself to Himself through love alone.
Then, desiring to behold that love-in-aloneness, that love without
otherness and duality as an external object, God is said to have
brought the world and all men into existence. (41)

Since man was created in God's image, love then becomes inherent in
man and is the basis of human life. Bābā Sawan Singh feels very
strongly about this. To deny love would mean to deny human
existence. We are repeatedly told in the Gurmat Siddhant that there
can be no justification for human existence if there is no love in
every human heart:

Love is the richest of all treasures. Without
it there is nothing and with it there is every-
thing. He who doesn't have love in his heart is
not entitled to call himself a human being. (42)

Although love is seen as an innate quality it has to be cultivated. Otherwise selfishness takes control of one's life as is the case with the self-centred individual or manmukh. A manmukh's life is devoid of love. He is said to be a victim of his own self-centredness. Bābā Sawan Singh has only harsh words for the self-centred individual whom he sees as being imprisoned "within the cycle of selfishness" and of whom he writes:

His life is worst than that of a beast, for he is caught in the act of selfishness and is blinded with the arrogance of his own ego. He is a prisoner within the limitations of his own self. (43)

Sant Mat is a path of love. Love, for all Sants is the supreme act of devotion. In the Gurmat Siddhant we find proclamations to this effect. Prera bhakti (loving devotion) is viewed as the only meaningful path to salvation, superseding all other forms of worship. It is love alone that is seen as the true response to God's divine presence:

All austerities, worship, knowledge and contemplation are useless without love, and a practitioner without love remains devoid of any knowledge of God's mysteries. Such a person is not capable of being a true devotee. He may worship for a thousand years, but he cannot be a true devotee. One who has not tasted the bliss of love cannot understand the mysteries of spiritual development. (44)

Here we are being told that love of God alone helps the devotee attain communion with God. He who loves God is made pure. The true devotee is thus one whose entire consciousness is centred in God. He is no longer attracted by the pleasures of the world. His contemplation on the

divine nature of God takes the form of love in devotion . Love and love alone is what he has to offer as this is his only treasure.

In prema bhakti love is not associated with reason or with the senses. Instead love is seen as a form of mystical apprehension. Bābā Sawan Singh argues that without the quality of love there can be no true knowledge of God. What is being said here is that since love brings the devotee nearer to God it makes mystical knowledge of God much easier. In the Gurmat Siddhānt this idea is presented in the following manner:

The path of love is not the path of arguments and reasoning. One has to be intensely one-pointed on this path. So long as our mind is scattered in intellectual quibblings and other pursuits, we cannot have true knowledge of spirituality. (45)

He further contends that:

In order to tread the Path of Love, one has to forget oneself entirely. By losing himself the Lover is able to gain Life Eternal (literally hundreds of imperishable lives). Such a condition is by no means lassitude of mind, but an awakening of the energies which enable one to merge oneself forever in the consciousness of the Lord. (46)

Speaking with the same conviction as Jalāl Āl-Dīn Rūmī , (47) Bābā Sawan Singh stresses that the single most important factor in developing spirituality is the cultivation of love for God. Compared with love, reason is but a poor instrument for understanding the mysteries of God. As a principle of unification, love is seen as standing higher than reason. Reason differentiates and separates.

Love, on the other hand, assimilates and binds. Bābā Sawan Singh sees love as a cosmic force, a kind of intuition of oneness with the spirit of the universe. Love does not contradict reason, but transcends it.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt love concerns sharing, participation and total union with God. Entering into God signifies for Bābā Sawan Singh the most intimate relationship with God. Bhakti is both sādhanā bhakti (the method) and sādhyā bhakti (the goal). This is implied in the following passage:

Devotion is a spontaneous current of attraction which draws one towards the beloved. Love is another name for union with the Beloved and for enjoying the bliss of being one with Him. Love is also a state of mind of a person who is awakened by deep-pointed or concentrated joy in the devotion to the Beloved. At this stage the goal of devotion is fulfilled. (48)

The picture painted here is not dissimilar to the one found in the Bhagavad Gītā. Here the devotee who has entered God is seen as enjoying timeless eternity by means of love. Such a state of mystical ecstasy can only be the result of God's gift of love to the devotee. (49)

In describing the state of God intoxication, Bābā Sawan Singh emphasizes the overwhelming power of love. When extreme affection for God takes hold of the devotee he becomes blind to everything except God. God becomes part and parcel of his being and he succumbs to the force of his love for God. Bābā Sawan Singh uses the Sūfī phrase "giving away one's heart" to God to describe this state:

Love is the term used for giving away one's heart on beholding another's attractive forms or qualities. Love is that which transforms the small drops of the soul into the ocean of God. Love is also that which diverts the mind from all desires of the world and attaches it to the one Beloved, i.e., the Lord (50)

We see here love being stipulated as the means of attaining God realization. This is so because it is through love that one is purified. He who loves God has a purified mind that is centred in Him. No longer lured by the attractions of the world the true devotee makes contemplation the principal means of expressing his love for God.

Bābā Sawan Singh also refers to the intimate, blissful merging into the essence of God as being an experience accompanied by intense feelings of awe and affection. He calls the former *bhāe* and the latter *bhāv*. In the following two passages he outlines the relationship between these two emotions:

When one loves a beautiful and divine Being, the remembrance of this being always attracts him and remains present in his inner mind. Such love, which is tinged with awe, becomes true affection. (51)

In describing awe Bābā Sawan Singh uses a romantic style not unknown in Sūfī circles:

One feels a peculiar sensation of love and abandon. When the devotee is in front of the Master both his heart and soul are attracted to him. In that state, under the influence of awe, the eyes get filled with tears, but the devotee cannot go beyond the limits of propriety. He cannot remain quiet and yet he cannot speak. This state defies description. A lover may be in

the room of the Beloved but cannot utter a syllable. (52)

The relationship between the devotee and God is often spoken of as one that is accompanied by a painful longing. The love of God is often a love in separation. The devotee is portrayed as grieving for he often feels estranged from God. This painful longing to be one with God is called *bireh* (53) in the Gurmat Siddhānt. *Bireh* is not a mere instant in the development of spiritual love. It is the pathetic element in the bhakti love relationship and one which attracts Bābā Sawan Singh's attention.

The Concept of Bireh

In the Vaisṇava tradition love of God is often linked with the agony of separation. The extraordinary proliferation of *virah* mystical literature in all northern Indian languages from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries points to a particular form of love symbolism. This love symbolism emphasizes the distinction between God and the finite soul, as well as the unique character of this relationship.

The term *virah* has a long tradition in Indian literature. Literally it means separation or absence. In medieval Indian love poetry it was used not only to denote the state of separation but also that of yearning. In Sant literature a purely spiritual connotation is attached to the term. It refers to the pangs of separation

experienced by the bereaved soul who yearns for mystical union. It is often depicted with a remarkable intensity of feeling.

Kabīr, for example, portrays virah as a sort of spiritual martyrdom which only the heroic soul can endure. It is at the same time the path which leads to the union with God. Callaewert in characterizing Kabir's use of the term in the Kabīr Vancnāvalī writes:

Only through enduring patiently the tormenting but purifying "fire of Virah" and ultimately giving up her life in that indistinguishable fire can the soul unite-obtain union, understood as a total merging into her husband Ram. (54)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt love's pleasurable aspect is not considered an adequate symbol depicting the devotee's attachment to God. Instead it is the painful aspect, the pangs of separation that is emphasized. Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of birah is one where the devotee finds himself in a state of constant longing for his Beloved. Birah is that feeling of yearning that is so overwhelming that the devotee cannot bear to be without God even for a single moment. He explains that:

Birah is the name of the active state of love. A lover who possesses Birah does not wish to lose sight of the Beloved even for a moment. Whenever he is not able to see Him or happens to be separated from Him, a feeling of pain stabs his heart and he feels an inner anguish. But the taste of this separation is in no way less sweet than that of being with the beloved. (55)

Bābā Sawan Singh proceeds to explain that:

This intense longing always surges up

like a wave or current in the heart and refreshes the mind with remembrance of Him. As a result, the heart's agony is assuaged by continuous remembrance and contemplation of the Lord. This creates a feeling of happiness. It is a stepping-stone, over which the seeker has to tread to attain communion with the Lord. (56)

He further asserts that there is no mystical union which is not preceded by pangs of separation on the part of the devotee:

In order to meet the Beloved, intense longing comes first, in the same manner as flowers bud and bloom on a fruit tree before it can bear fruit. Similarly, where there is no birah (intense longing), there can be no meeting with the Beloved. In other words, this longing is a pre-requisite for meeting the Lord. (57)

This continuous flow of emotional religiosity is of gradual intensity. Bābā Sewan Singh sees birah as progressing through various stages when he says:

The first is the recollection of one's Beloved, accompanied by longing and contemplation. This condition of recollection and contemplation becomes

so strong that a devotee's attention is completely devoted to the form of his Beloved, which remains fixed in his mind's eye. The Beloved becomes the sustainer of his life, and He will not leave him. (58)

Intense longing has a very deep influence because of its powerful current of energy. Once it is established no other impressions can enter the mind. Such a devotee completely forgets his body and his clothes, because he is being pulled by the magnet of the remembrance of the Lord, and his mind is completely absorbed in contemplation of the Lord. (59)

Loosely speaking, the manner in which the intensity of bireh is described in the Gurmat Siddhānt could be seen as being parallel to the manner in which Vaisṇava tradition presents Rāmānuja's idea of saran (surrender). Bābā Sawan Singh sees the first stage of saran as one where the devotee demonstrates a favourable disposition towards God. This is then followed by an intense desire to see God which eventually envelopes the consciousness of the seeker. (60)

Bireh cannot be bypassed, dispensed with or substituted by an alternative pain free approach to divine union. It is no ordinary physical pain. Being caused by God it can only be alleviated by Him. However, it is this very pain that heightens the beauty of spiritual communion for the devotee. The following passage indicates this quite clearly:

Longing produces love and veneration for the Beloved. God is Love. Therefore, the devotee comes nearer to the Lord in proportion to the degree of his longing. He also realizes in greater degrees the value of his Beloved, so much so that the pure and noble form of the Beloved is always fixed in his mind. (61)

Bābā Sawan Singh has attempted to convey the mood and intensity of bireh in a rather down-to-earth manner. His language is rather straight forward and mundane. Had he decided to adopt a more poetic approach he would have most certainly have written in the style of someone like Tulsī Sāhib. In the Sabdāvalī we find a classic example of a poetic description of virah that all Rādhāsoṁī Satgurūs would most certainly hold dear. The passage reads as follows:

I am restless; mad in love, I pine for my beloved.
A stream of tears constantly flows from my eyes,
Every moment the pain of love throbs in my heart,

And I have lost awareness of my very existence.
 My body has been denuded of sentience and
 sensibility.
 And I am oblivious to all my surroundings.
 I am impervious to the varied currents,
 And my mind is now dead.
 The physician knows not my malady,
 Of what avail are his remedies?
 My wound is deep inside the heart,
 How shall I describe my pain to him?
 The Master physician alone knows my agony,
 And he has the "herb" to cure me of my ailment.
 My malady only he knows
 Who suffers from it, O Tulsi;
 And he alone feels the pain
 Who goes through its pangs. (62)

Both Tulsi Sāhib and Bābā Sawan Singh share the same beliefs about the
 pangs of separation.. They both indicate that birah involves a
 wholehearted desire for God. The devotee has to become completely
 detached from the world if he is to see God in everything everywhere. But
 this total attachment does not come easily and hence the painful pining.
 So long as there is no union with God there remains the sweet agony of
 separation.

Authors like Vaudeville draw our attention to the resemblances between the
 Sant term virah and the Sūfī notion of īshq. (63) Both refer to a
 tormenting longing on the part of the devotee for the absent Beloved. The
 question as to whether such comparisons can be applied to the Gurmat
Siddhānt must be handled with caution. One must point out the differences
 that exist in Sant and Sūfī love poetry regarding the use of the term
 virah/īshq. The dramatic persona of the former usually portrays a woman
 lamenting for her departed husband. (64) In Sūfī poetry, on the other
 hand, it is a man in quest of an unseen, previously unknown Beloved.
 Despite the differences, however, the common emphasis on intense love, as

communicated through pain, agony, anxiety and grief is recurrent in the writings of both the Sants and the Sūfīs. In the Sant camp Bābā Sawan Singh is no exception. (65)

The Concept of Prasād

The idea of assistance from God in some tangible way for the betterment of human life is central to the bhakti tradition in India. (66) Prasād means "grace", "benediction", "benevolence", "graciousness", "tenderness", "kindness", "righteousness", etc. of God.

In the Rādhasoāmī tradition devotion is seen as being constantly supported by the grace of a benevolent God. God is pictured to be a benevolent Master who bestows upon his devotees the splendour of spiritual liberation. It would be presumptuous to claim that Bābā Sawan Singh has a theology of grace. However, it is no exaggeration to say that prasād (67) constitutes an important element of his concept of bhakti. His attitude towards divine grace is summarized in the following statement:

The gift of devotion is in the hands of God. In other words He Himself makes it possible for us to be His devotees. He cuts assunder all the ties binding His devotees to the world and makes them free. (68)

This passage tells us something about the metaphysical assumptions that underlie the idea of prasād in the Gurmat Siddhant. Bābā Sawan Singh's belief in divine grace presupposes the existence of a God who places Himself directly in relation with the devotee and guides the whole course

of his life. He sees God bestowing his prasād by virtue of the fact that He is by nature compassionate, i.e., full of infinite love. His nature as love causes Him to be drawn to the devotee, whose suffering affects Him intensely. Man suffers because of māyā. Without God's grace we are told, man is helpless in combating its evil effects. The best and surest way of combating delusion then is to seek refuge in the infinite mercy of God.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt it is assumed that that the sincere devotee finds spiritual strength and inspiration in the firm conviction that an all loving God will not allow His devotee to stray from Him. It is also assumed that in order for God's voice to be heard there must be a prior gift of grace. It is this gift that enables the devotee to be permeated by Śabd. If God does not grant this gift there can be no spiritual enlightenment. Communion with God is, in Bābā Sawan Singh's eyes, impossible to attain through human effort alone. (69)

Like the Sikh Gurūs, Bābā Sawan Singh believes that God does not bestow His prasād on all. Only those who believe in Him and who meditate on Nām are granted this divine gift. God, therefore, does not administer His grace indiscriminately. (70) Why it is granted to some and withheld from others no one can say. There is much that must remain hidden from the limited understanding of man. The exercise of God's grace is of this nature. The gift of prasād is also seen as crucial in facilitating the proper practice of gurṭbhakti.

The Concept of Gurūbhakti

Although Bābā Sawan Singh does not dedicate much space in the Gurmat Siddhānt as is done in other Rādhāsoāmī texts (71) to the concept of gurūbhakti, it nevertheless occupies an important position in his devotional thought. He starts by proclaiming gurubhakti to be "the highest form of worship", "the best and highest method of meeting God" (72) and continues by stating that:

Devotion to material mosques and temples is an external practice. The truth is: Excepting the Saints and Masters, there is no real mosque or temple. God is manifested within the Saints. They alone are worthy of homage and worship. (73)

He then equates devotion to the Satgurū with devotion to God, arguing that there is no difference between the two. He proclaims that:

A Master is the medium through which individuals are connected with God. In other words, Paramatma (God), Shabd (Sound Current or Word, and Guru (Master) are three different forms of the same Lord. If we offer devotion to Shabd in the physical form, which is the Guru, we are then immediately connected with the Lord inside. Devotion to the Guru, is in fact, true devotion to the Lord. (74)

Here an age old Hindu belief is being repeated. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, for example, we find bhakti being related to both God and the gurū. Chapter VI verse 23 reads:

These subjects which have been declared shine forth to the high-souled one who has the highest devotion for God and for his spiritual teacher as for God. Yea they shine forth to the high-souled one. (75)

The Gurmat Siddhānt also speaks of the relationship between the devotee and God as one which is indispensable:

A fish cannot live without water because without it, it dies gasping for water. Similarly, a Gurumukh is sustained by spiritual energy as a result of deep diving into the ocean of love for the Guru. For him, nearness to the Guru is heaven, and to be away from the Guru makes him burn in the fires of hell. (76)

Bābā Sawan Singh goes as far as to proclaim that the true devotee is the one who has merged with the Satgurū:

Guru and God are two different entities but their Godhood is one. Similarly, the Guru and the devotee appear to be two different persons but they have one soul, that is their souls are one, and when a devotee speaks it is not he but the Guru who is speaking. (77)

From the above passage we are able to learn something about the manner in which gurūbhakti is perceived. Bābā Sawan Singh sees the relationship between the devotee and God as beginning with the devotee being aware of his finitude as opposed to the infinitude of the Satgurū. As the devotee comes into more intimate contact with the Satgurū he casts off any vestige of remoteness that exists between him and the Satgurū. The devotee then abandons himself totally to the Satgurū and the two become one.

It is the loving devotion of the devotee for his Satgurū that transforms their relationship from one of differentiated separatedness to one of personal union. therefore, it would not be incorrect to state that in Bābā Sawan Singh's eyes gurūbhakti involves the internalization of the Satgurū

by the devotee. The devotee sees no other option than to strive for oneness with the Satgurū and in doing so to experience oneness with God. In order to further the centrality of the Satgurū in gurūbhakti we now turn our attention to what is said in the Gurmat Siddhānt about satsang and darsan.

The Significance of Satsang

The early Sants took satsang to mean a congregation of the faithful and placed heavy emphasis on its supreme virtue. In the early Sikh tradition for example, we find the term sādḥ saṅgat (congregation of the holy) being used to describe the Sikh fellowship. Gurū Nānak taught that if good company encouraged good conduct, the assembly of men and women who had experienced the Satgurū's grace would stimulate spiritual development. (78) In present day orthodox Sikhism satsang means a gathering for corporate worship of those who seek the Gurū's blessings. The central activity of the satsang is the singing of kīrtan (hymns) and listening to the reading of the Sikh scriptures which is considered uniquely effective as a means of invoking the Gurū's grace. (79) Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of satsang represents a slight departure from that of his Sikh predecessors. It not only refers to the congregation of the faithful but more so to that of the Satgurū. It comes closer to the term satsanga meaning the "company of realized holy men". (80) He explains that:

The meaning of the word "Sat" is to awake, and that of "Sang" is to unite, so Satsang means the company or association with one who is awake or is a "realized soul". Sat pervades the Sat-Guru.

His company is Satsang. One becomes soul-conscious by attending His discourses. (81)

He then goes on to point out that furthermore:

"Sat" also means life. The company of a living person is Satsang. The Scriptures point out that wherever there is a Master there is Satsang. Satsang is dependent upon a Master and it can only be had through Him. (82)

There is mention in the Gurmat Siddhant of "outer satsang" and "inner satsang". Whilst the former refers to its congregational aspect, the latter is said to be the occasion where contact is made with the Satgurū on the inner plane. Both, however, are seen as being complementary to one another as the following passage illustrates:

The two kinds of Satsang, outer and inner, may be explained thus: One (outer Satsang) is an effort to kindle a fire, while the other (inner Satsang) is like sitting near a fire and escaping from the cold while also accomplishing many other tasks. One who associates with a Sant has his soul awakened by the spiritual currents emanating from him. Thesecond state(inner Satsang) is therefore supremely superior. (83)

Like the Vaisnavas and his fellow Sants Bābā Sawan Singh describes satsang as a kind of "spiritual college" where the devotee "partakes of the fragrance of the spirituality of the Saints". (84) It is a place where the devotee is cleansed. He speaks here of satsang being a kind of spiritual workshop and notes the following:

It is an extraordinary workshop where the mind is so chiselled that all its ugliness and dirt are removed, and it is made worthy of meeting the Lord. It is truly a pilgrimage where hundreds of our bad karmas are washed away and the mind becomes pure. (85)

It is by keeping the company of the Satgurū, we are told, that the devotee is assured of spiritual purification. Bābā Śawan Singh writes that:

Satsang, or the company of a Saint, ushers light and dispells darkness. But such company is difficult to obtain. Satsang is a sacred place where flow the waters of discernment; and bathing in them brings all the four salvations. Whoever comes to Satsang of a Saint loses the sense of caste, creed and color, like the muddy waters that become pure and clear by joining the Ganges water. By the company of Saints a crow turns into a swan. (86)

In a more poetic vein he concludes that:

Just as water of a stream loses its identity when it is poured into the Ganges; just as the iron blade of the butcher becomes gold when it is touched with a philosopher's stone, just as a neem tree acquires perfume when it is grown near a sandalwood tree; just as a piece of stone turns into salt when it stays in a salt mine, so also does one become a Saint, if he remains in the company of Saints. (87)

This glorification of the supposed spiritual qualities of satsang is something found very often in Sant literature. Satsangs are held by all Sants as a powerful means of purification and salvation. We find references to the spiritual significance of the satsang in the writings of Kabīr, (88) Nāmdēv, (89) Śūr Dās (90) and later, Tulsī Śāhib (91)

The Significance of Darsan

In Hindu philosophy the term *darśana* refers to the six schools of Hindu philosophy in the sense of points of view representing the varied phases of truth viewed from different angles of vision. (92). This Sanskrit term is usually employed in Sanskrit literature to signify insight or spiritual vision. Hindus popularly talk of the deity "giving *darśan*" and the disciples "taking *darśan*".

In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition *darśan* means "sight" of the Satgurū. It implies sight on a rich multiplicity of symbolic and spiritual levels. These levels demonstrate a complex mix of doctrinal and mythic, perceptual, visionary, interactionary and experiential dimensions in the relationship between the charismatic Satgurū and his disciples. (93)

At the heart of Hindu worship there lies an exchange and mutuality of vision. It is not only the worshipper who comes to have a vision of God in seeing the image of the deity, but the deity sees the worshipper as well. The divine gaze of the deity is what the worshipper seeks. The "seeing" which occurs here is not only a passive awareness, but requires an active focussing so that it becomes a kind of touching. Thus the receiving of *darśan* connotes a special kind of knowing, an insight which can at times unfold into a vision. (94)

The Rādhāsoāmī tradition places heavy emphasis on seeing and being seen, by the Satgurū. Importance is placed on seeing the Satgurū's physical form in *satsaṅg*. Emphasis is also given to the internal visualization of his form in meditation. It is not surprising,

therefore that when we turn to Rādhāsoāmī sacred literature, we find a rich visual imagery. This is especially true of the poetic compositions of Shiv Dayāl Singh. He gives special emphasis to what takes place visually between the devotee and his Satgurū.

The darśan of the Satgurū is conceived of as dayā dr̥ṣṭi (glance of compassion). The idea that dr̥ṣṭi, the "seeing" or "glance", of the Satgurū aids the devotee in achieving deliverance seems to be a crucial aspect of the Rādhāsoāmī understanding of what is supposed to take place visually between The Satgurū and the devotee. In other words, by joining glances with the Satgurū the devotee it is believed, gains access to the benevolent power that apparently emanates from the Satgurū's eyes. (95)

Darśan is linked with a more explicit theory of vision. Practitioners of Surat Śabd Yoga believe that there is a current of sight (dr̥ṣṭi-kī-dhār) that flows outward from the eyes of the Satgurū into the external world. It is believed that by mixing his gaze with that of the Satgurū the devotee can absorb this current which is said to draw the devotee up into the higher realms of spiritual experience. We find references to such a current in the Gurmat Siddhānt. The following two passages illustrate this:

One finds a strange radiation and attraction
in his eyes and in his forehead and
when one gazes at them for even a
moment. He feels a pull, and his
attention gathers together and seems to
ascend to the higher subtle regions from
then gross regions. His consciousness expands
and is elevated. (96)

Where a Satguru lives, the entire environment is spiritualized by his body, mind, intellect and the mode of his life. His very presence greatly influences the people around him. When a Satguru speaks or makes a special movement of the hands or confers a gracious look, a special current of attention emanates from him and creates a powerful influence on the minds of the audience. Such a current of attention helps the soul to ascend. (97)

The idea that "looking" carries power is commonplace in Hindu culture. It is widely believed that a person who is envious, or is ill-disposed can inflict harm, usually inadvertent, on persons or objects by merely looking at them. According to Rādhāsoāmī belief, however, the benign gaze of a Sant is the opposite of this so-called eye. To fall under the gaze of the Satgurū is to come into contact with the current emanating from his innermost recess. For a devotee to engage in eye contact with a Satgurū affords the most intimate kind of communication with God. (98)

Bābā Sawan Singh perceives the eyes of the Satgurū to be the most prominent feature of his face. This is in line with the general Hindu belief that the eyes are the agents of divine vision. (99) Therefore, to look at them intently affords the devotee a glimpse of the splendour of the light of God shining within the Satgurū:

In Satsang and whenever one has an opportunity to serve the Master, one should, like a small child, gaze at him without blinking the eyes. One should also fix his attention on the entire face of the Master. At such time no extraneous thoughts should be allowed to enter the mind. By this method of Contemplation, we imbibe within ourselves the active influence of our

Master's way of life. This constitutes the first step in our progress towards spirituality. (100)

Sudhir Kakar has done research on gaze fixation at Beas Satsang where Charan Singh is the present spiritual head. His documentation of the impact of darsan on the devotee is a revealing one. He writes:

Without any preliminaries the Satguru looks intently for a couple of minutes at one section of his small audience, regally turns his face and stares unblinkingly at another section—a virtuoso use of look and silence. The transformation of the disciples' faces as their eyes look into his is remarkable. The eyes glaze over as they drink his visage visibly, their brows smoothen out, the jaw muscles slacken and a beautiful expression slowly spreads on their faces. (101)

In the Gurmat Siddhant both gurūbhakti and gurūsevā are treated with equal weightage. Fundamental to both concepts is the idea of complete loving devotion to the Satgurū. This devotion takes a variety of forms, one of which is gurūbhakti. We now move on to examine the other form of gurū devotion known as gurūsevā.

The Concept of Gurūsevā

Fundamental to Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of gurūsevā (service to the gurū) is the widespread Hindu idea of the ideal devotee's sacrifice of mind, body and wealth (tan, man, dhan) to God or the gurū. (102) This classification of seva has also been adopted by Shiv Dayāl Singh from whom Bābā Sawan Singh borrows heavily. The Gurmat Siddhant defines the various kinds of gurūsevā as follows:

Service is of four kinds: That which is rendered with the body, with wealth, with mind, and with the soul (surat). The highest type of service which anyone can render is service to the Lord, or His manifestation in the human form, namely an Adept or a Master. (103)

Service with the body refers in principle to the idea of physical sevā. This involves the rendering of physical sevā in the Satgurū's name. The Gurmat Siddhānt stresses that true bodily seva is that which is rendered in the spirit of loving sacrifice, by God's grace and without any thought of reward or recognition. To drive home the point that physical sevā is a spiritual discipline Bābā Sawan Singh quotes from Gurū Arjan:

Whatever service is possible for you to do with your hands for the Master, you should do it, because it is the Master who gives you the protection of His Hands and saves us from the fire of transmigration. You should work for Him, because through Him you will know the Lord. (104)

It is important to note here that at Beas the idea of bodily sevā does not correspond to the understanding of the term put forward by some segments of the Kādhāsōmī community. Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of physical sevā does not, for example include the idea of worshipping the physical person of the Satgurū, his leavings or the repository of his remains as is the case at Soāmī Bāgh. At Soāmī Bāgh the Satgurū's body, particularly his feet and mouth are worshipped as sources of a flow of spiritual current called chaitanyar kī dhār. It is taught that to receive and worship things from the Satgurū, especially his food leavings, mouth rinsings or foot washings is a kind of physical sevā.

The taking of such things is viewed as assimilating the true nature of the Satgurū, and is said to enhance the devotee's ability to achieve salvation.

According to another interpretation the leavings of the Satgurū are but bhari phulzā or "outer accretions" on a sublime divine current that originates from the highest cosmic plane. This current is seen as "dripping" from the body of the Satgurū. It is this divine current that the devotee internalizes when he worships and ingests the Satgurū's leavings. (105) Bābā Sawan Singh and the entire Beas line categorically reject this belief.

The phrase "service by mind" indicates an attitude of mind that is God centred. It is taught that the mind has to be surrendered to God so that it can be purified and made receptive to God's grace. Gurū Arjan is Bābā Sawan Singh's reference here. The following represents a paraphrase of the teachings of the Gurū as it appears in the Gurmat Siddhant:

* You should therefore serve such a person who perceives the great devotion and the inner longing of your heart. Such a one is no other than a True Master. You should make an offering of your mind at the altar of your Guru, and worship Him because He is the incarnation of that Deathless One. (106)

Bābā Sawan Singh's defines spiritual service as "service by the soul". Spiritual sevā is understood as a spiritual discipline in the context of Surat Śabd Yoga. True sevā is seen to be the inward contemplative expression of love, faith and sweet remembrance of God. This can only

be achieved through Surat Sabd Yoga. The sincere practice of this discipline is seen here as the performance of a spiritual sevā in the Satgurū's name. Bābā Sawan Singh explains that:

Service to the Master consists in surrendering oneself at his Lotus Feet and in being devoted to Him and the name of the Lord. The Master is actually Shabd incarnated in the human form. Therefore, service to Him is to merge oneself in Shabd, which the highest service of all. (107)

The underlying idea behind gurūsevā is the total submission of the devotee to the Satgurū and the wish to serve him in every possible way. The devotee is required to give everything including himself to the Satgurū. In surrendering himself to the Satgurū, the devotee "loses" everything in order to "gain himself". The rationale behind this Rādhāsoāmī belief is that everything offered to the Satgurū already belongs to him. In fact the devotee's entire being (body mind and soul) are really the Satgurū's and are given to the devotee in trust.

Spiritual sevā is seen as being fulfilled when the devotee learns to die while living. It is only by being truly detached that the devotee can truly serve the Satgurū in the spirit of complete self-surrender. Being detached the devotee can live in and with the world but not of it. Bābā Sawan Singh's justification for performing gurusevā is based on this belief. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we read that:

Our soul is not of this world and its home lies beyond. But so long as one is not able to die while living, one does not end the cycle of births and rebirth. One can be free from this predicament through the grace of a Master, by completely surrendering

oneself to Him and thus banishing the ego
and becoming a Gurumukh. (108)

The ability to serve the Satgurū by performing spiritual seva is
viewed as being karmically preordained. Bābā Sawan Singh believes
that:

Only such a one is in a position to serve
the Master who has abundant Grace of the
Lord, because this service is imprinted on
the individual's forehead and was preordained
as the result of his previous life's actions
or karmas. (109)

Gurūsevā is accepted as the highest type of service a devotee can
perform. Bābā Sawan Singh calls it "the key to the treasure of Nam",
(110) "the Fountain-head of the knowledge of God". (111) It is not
only an instrument of salvation but a way in which the devotee can rid
himself of his worldly attachments and karmic burdens. What is being
suggested here is that Surat Śabd Yogā is the highest and most
effective form of gurūsevā. Bābā Sawan Singh is in effect equating
gurūsevā with Nām bhakti. This comes to light in the following two
passages:

The highest service is that of the Guru,
and it is also the purest. The Guru is
free from all ties and attachments. He
is an ocean full of the Surging Waves
of Love. By serving Him we become free
from ties and attachments to the ephemeral
world. (112)

If everything is surrendered to Him in all
humility we are released from the load of
karmas and becoming worthy of realizing Him
within. But so long as the record of karmas
is not obliterated internally by destroying
our ego, we cannot go beyond the three gunas
(qualities) and consequently cannot become
actionless. (113)

Bābā Sawan Singh sees gurūsevā as being only possible through selfless surrender at the lotus feet of the Satgurū. Selfless surrender he views as possible only through detachment.

The Concept of Saran

The term saran, often associated with the act of seeking shelter or protection (114) is a common noun in Rādhāsoāmī literature. The devotee is regarded as being absolutely helpless on his own, totally unable to extricate himself from the clutches of Kāl and māyā. Therefore he must seek the protection of the Satgurū.

Bābā Sawan Singh attaches great importance to the question of surrendering to and seeking refuge in the Satgurū. He commits himself unreservedly to the belief that there can be no fruitful devotion without selfless surrender. In his eyes no amount of gurūbhakti will do any good without surrender "at the altar of the Satgurū". He exhorts the devotee to "give away his heart" to his Satgurū and states the following:

It is essential that we give our heart to our Master, for when one gives away one's heart, one automatically gives one's whole body and puts one's entire life in the hands of the Master. (115)

Devotion to the Master is intense love for him. If we love anybody, we serve him. We are prepared to sacrifice everything for him. Love knows no burden and no compulsion. A devotee gives away everything for the sake of his Beloved-his body, wealth, mind and

soul, in fact, everything is surrendered
at the altar of the Master. (116)

Saran is seen in the Gurmat Siddhānt as the proper mode of devotion. Like Rāmānuja Bābā Sawan Singh sees devotion as complete attachment to God and/or the Satgurū. In his adoration and attachment to his Master the devotee is pictured as being absolutely disinterested in all other objects of the world. In the Vedārtha Samgraha Rāmānuja uses the term paramābhakti to describe this act of loving attachment. The devotee is said to place his heart in the heart of God by dedicating all his actions to Him. (117) Although Bābā Sawan Singh does not explicitly use the term, his thoughts on saran certainly reflect the spirit of paramābhakti. The following quotation serves as a useful illustration:

This body, mind and life-and even our
religion, all bind us to this world.
As soon as they are surrendered at the
Lotus Feet of the Master, we become
detached and shall not be born again. (118)

It is recognized that saran is that attitude which implies unquestioning acceptance of and surrender to the will of the Satgurū which is seen as being no different from the divine will. In other words, in taking refuge in the Satgurū the devotee is effectively enshrining his faith in Hukām (God's law) which is the ultimate expression of His Bhānā (divine will). Of this Bābā Sawan Singh says:

In love there is no law except the Will of
Beloved. Whatever the Beloved orders or
commands, the lover bows his head in obedience.
(119)

Finally we see the various benefits of self-abnegation for spiritual emancipation being spelt out in the Gurnat Siddhant. These are listed in the usual summary fashion and appear to have been culled from the teachings of Bhāī Gurdas:

The Gurus have mentioned various benefits follow that from taking shelter at the feet of the Master. Pains, worries and calamities are removed. Lust, anger, greed and other defects disappear. Both the body and the mind become pure, and one gains peace. All troubles are forgotten and the fear of death is banished. The devotee crosses the ocean of wordly existence. He has constant devotion for the Name. The lotus of the heart flowers into final bloom. The disciple awakens. The Lord dwells in his mind and is seen everywhere. The devotee gets bliss and reaches the Supreme Abode. (120)

Two assumptions underlie Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of saran. Firstly it assumes a certain state of readiness on the devotee's part to surrender to the Satgurū and God. This is associated with a deep conviction that God alone is the saviour and that there is no other way of attaining His grace except by self-surrender. Secondly it is assumed that there is a readiness on the part of the devotee to submit to the will of the Satgurū. This is linked with the belief that God (through the Satgurū) will help the devotee overcome the dangers of worldly existence. However, this is seen as being possible only if the devotee yields up his spirit to the Satgurū in loving humility. These two assumptions say something about the manner in which bhakti is conceived of in the Gurnat Siddhant. It involves the universal acceptance of God's/the Satgurū's supreme transcendence but who descends into the heart of the devotee and compassionately grants him His divine grace.

The Concept of Charan Kamāl

The idea of sitting or prostrating oneself at charan kamāl or the so-called perfect (lotus) feet of the gurū has its roots in the practices of gurūpadā-sevā and gurūpadā-pūjā (service to the gurū, worship of the gurū). This involves not only the veneration of the feet of the gurū but also the total bodily and emotional surrender at his feet.

In the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī the ideal devotee is pictured as not only loving but also longing for the Satgurū's feet. There is mention of the devotee praising and even licking them and drinking the water in which they have been washed. (121) This idea of drinking foot washings could be seen as being related to an old Sikh ritual claimed by some to have been started from the times of Gurū Nānak. The Nirāṅkāri Sikhs for example, claim that it is an old Sikh ritual to wash the feet of the saṅgat and give it to the congregation to drink as nectar called charan amrit. (122) In the Gurmat Siddhānt the term charan kamāl (perfect feet), translated as "lotus feet" may somehow be seen as being indirectly related to the term charan amrit (nectar of the feet), the emphasis in both cases being on the feet.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt a significant portion of the references to charan kamāl are taken from the Sikh scriptures which Bābā Sawan Singh often paraphrases. He also calls the feet of the Satgurū charan kamāl rāj (perfect and sovereign feet) which he translates as "the dust of the lotus feet" (123) and glorifies. In stressing its spiritual and esoteric significance, he calls it "the true place of pilgrimage"

(124) and "the melody of the Lord". (125) He also talks of the feet of the Satgurū with intense veneration and sees in them an important vehicle of spiritual salvation. The adulatory tone which Bābā Sawan Singh adopts with regards to the so-called lotus feet of the Satgurū is highlighted below:

He breaks our wordly bonds.
And binds us to the lotus feet.
He attunes us to the Shabd. (126)

O cross the ocean
The lotus feet are the ship
His laws are his own
He knows them all. (127)

O brother, release is gained
by listening to the Name;
The service of the feet
of the Master is like
going on a pilgrimage;
You are accepted in His
court and find an honoured. (128)

We are being told here that by prostrating himself at the feet of the Satgurū, the devotee is performing the task of equipping himself for his journey into the inner self. The assumption is that it is only through the grace of the Satgurū that spiritual growth is made possible. The desire for spiritual liberation must, in Bābā Sawan Singh's eyes be preceded by the ability to accept the Satgurū as the sole source of spiritual power. This being the case the devotee is told to symbolically look upon the lotus feet of the Satgurū as if it were "the holiest place of pilgrimage" (129) which is graphically described in the following manner. Here we find Bābā Sawan Singh once again paraphrasing Bhāī Gurdas:

The Ganges, Saraswati, and Godawari, Gaya,
 Prayag, Set, Kurukshetra and Mansarovar,
 Kashi, Kanshi, Dwarko, Methura and Ayodhya,
 Gomti, Avantika and the snow-bound Kidar Nath,
 Narbada, various forests, sacred spots and
 Kailash.
 The blue Mandrachal, and Mount Sumer,
 Sacred spots, wealth, truth, righteousness,
 Compassion and contentment,
 All of them together are not equal to the dust of
 the feet of the Master. (130)

This symbolic glorification of the majesty of the Satgurū's feet has a deeper message which could be interpreted as follows. There can be no freedom from suffering if the devotee cannot find the freedom in his heart to bow to the will of the Satgurū. This is like saying there is no devotion without gurūbhakti and no sevā without gurūsevā.

The Concept of Vairāg

Vairāg (131) is defined in the Gurmat Siddhānt as detachment or disengagement from worldly attachments. (132) The true devotee is one who has detached himself from the senses and subdued his passions. He submits his ego to the Satgurū and renounces all thoughts of the world. According to Bābā Sawan Singh the true devotional posture is one where one remains aloof and satisfied within himself. The true devotee is the one who remains detached by humbling himself and becoming an instrument in the hands of the Satgurū, who like God is beyond any form of worldly attachment. The following passages furnish us with some idea of what Bābā Sawan Singh sees as detachment:

He alone is detached who has risen above
 attachment and is moving towards meeting

the Lord by withdrawing completely from all wordly attachments. The Sikh Scriptures call God a Detached Being, because He was never attached to anything and because such a being is free from all desire and is never a victim of attachments. (133)

The truly detached person knows that one day his own body, his house, his palace and all his wordly property-all attachments-have to be left behind, and nobody knows when this will happen. Therefore, he lives in this world in name only and gives more attention to the purification of his soul, for he does not wish to barter his soul for the sake of this world. (134)

Bābā Sawan Singh then goes on to add that without detachment there can be no spiritual progress. A complete and total attachment to Nām is what the devotee must strive for if there is to be any spiritual progress. The devotee, he tells us must live in this world but remain unaffected by it. This can only be achieved when the devotee is absorbed in Sabd and his mind is fully and truly attuned to God. (135)

The suggestion here is not that liberation is to be sought by renouncing the world as such but by renouncing attachment to it. True detachment consists not in inactivity but disinterested activity. Bābā Sawan Singh sees self-interested attachment and not activity itself that binds one to suffering. This detachment finds its real purpose we are led to believe, in a single-minded attachment to God and the Satgurū. Here we find the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita being echoed. (136)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt detachment is seen alongside desireless action. It is, in fact, seen as the pre-requisite for desireless action. Desireless action is only possible when one is free of wordly attachments. (137) In advocating desireless action Bābā Sawan Singh is not saying that all desires are to be abrogated. Indeed one desire is explicitly advocated, namely, the desire for release from the cycle of transmigration. Also desireless action does not mean a total absence of concern about the results of one's actions. The devotee is naturally to be concerned about the results of all actions that promote spiritual growth.

Detachment, however, can only be successfully achieved through the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga and gurūbhakti. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we read that:

When we do our spiritual practice according to the instructions of the Master and surrender ourselves completely to Him; we cheerfully undergo our fate karmas and create no new karmas to be undergone in a future life. The stored karmas are gradually destroyed by the practice of Nam or Shabd. Sometimes the Master helps us in bearing the load of our fate karmas so that what might have been a fatal stab becomes a pinprick, with the result that we undergo our karmas without much pain or mental anguish. (138)

We have here a belief being voiced that is very common in Rādhāsoāmī circles. It is the belief that the Satgurū is able to lighten the karmic load of the initiate. (139) It is believed that when the initiate offers his loving devotion to his Satgurū he is in a sense delivering up some of his negative karma which is then taken up by the Satgurū. (140) It is also said that those who enter into a

relationship with a Satguru and seek his protection are guaranteed full salvation within four lives. The belief is also that his death will be relatively painless, and that he will not fall back into the cycle of transmigration. The initiate is also told that should he be reborn it will be in human form so that spiritual practice can be resumed where it was left off prior to death.

Summary

We commenced by examining Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of bhakti and highlighted his religious understanding of the term. We also saw how bhakti was used to denote an intimate, single-minded devotion to God. We proceeded to explain that in the Gurmat Siddhānt bhakti was conceived as the highest path of salvation. In conjunction with this belief we examined the idea that bhakti meant the loving participation of the soul of the devotee in the total being of God.

In surveying the concept of prem we pointed out that in the Gurmat Siddhānt it had specific spiritual connotations. Love, as Bābā Sawan Singh saw it, was God's essence. We also explained that prema bhakti was viewed as the most intimate relationship that the devotee could hope to have with God. In describing the state of God-intoxication we emphasized that the overwhelming power of love was accompanied by intense feelings of awe and affection.

With the idea of birch we pictured the depth of feeling and intense yearning for God portrayed in the Gurmat Siddhānt. In looking at the concept of prasād we examined the belief that no salvation was possible without God's grace and through human effort alone.

In studying Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of gurūbhakti we noted that no attempt was made to differentiate between devotion to God and devotion to the Satgurū. In examining the role of devotion to the Satgurū we looked at the significance of satsaṅg and darsan. Having surveyed the definition of satsaṅg in the Gurmat Siddhānt we highlighted Bābā Sawan Singh's belief that it represented a potent means of spiritual purification and salvation. We then proceeded to look at the concept of darsan and explained Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of gaze fixation in the broader context of the Rādhāsoāmī theory of divine vision.

Finally, we analyzed the concept of gurūsevā. We saw that Bābā Sawan Singh preferred to focus his attention on the idea of spiritual sevā as the highest form of sevā via the practice of Surat Śabd Yoga. We linked the general term gurūsevā to the idea of saran and vairāg and explained what surrender at the lotus feet of the Satgurū meant and how this was equated with seeking refuge in the divine will of God. We looked at Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the term vairāg and learnt of its relationship to the idea of attachment to God, and also how detachment was not to be equated with renunciation. We also saw how detachment or vairag was related to desireless action which in turn was understood to be action in relation to devotion to God.

NOTES

1. For a brief explanation of the etymology of the term bhakti see T. Burrow, The Sanskrit Language (London, 1955), pp. 77 and 168.
2. A thoroughly researched and well documented study of the semantics of bhakti is M. Dhavamony, Love of God According to Saiva Siddhānta. A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Saivism. See especially pp 2-23. Useful supplementary information is available from M. Hare, "Notes on Two Sanskrit Terms: 'Bhakti and Srāddha' " in Indo-Iranian Journal (1963), pp. 124-145. See also G.A. Grierson's contribution on "Bhakti Marga", in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol 2 (Edinburgh, 1930), p. 539.
3. This is the view of Grierson, in "Bhakti Marga", p. 539.
4. For a study of the Vedic notion of bhakti see Dhavamony, Love of God According to Saiva Siddhānta. A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Saivism, chapter 1 of Part 2.
5. This, as Zaehner points out is clearly demonstrated in the Mahābhārata (1.66.76 and 17.3.7). see Zaehner, The Bhagavad Gītā p. 181.
6. See Dhavamony, Love of God According to Saiva Siddhānta. A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Saivism, p. 22.
7. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 2.
8. Our information is based on M. Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Oxford, 1970), p. 295.
9. In the Nārada Sūtra sakhyā śakti means attachment, which is seen as taking a variety of forms. There is rūpā-śakti (attachment to the beauty of God), pūjāśakti (attachment to the worship of God) and smaranasakti (attachment to the meaning of God). The term denoting "entering into the family of God" is vātsalyāśakti. Both Sandīlya's and Nārada's Bhakti Sūtras appear in English in The Sacred Books of the Hindus Vol VII (Allahabad, 1911) Svapensvares's commentary on the Sandīlya Sūtra is also included in the translation.
10. In the Nārada Sūtra there is also talk of a steady ascent to a genuine love of God. See R.K. Dwivedi, "The Nature of Bhakti in the Nārada-Bhakti Sūtras" in Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society 31 (1965-1966), pp. 146-147.
11. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 2. See also p. 3 of the same volume.
12. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 5.
13. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 10.
14. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 26.

15. See for example, the following passages : I.8, I.8-10, II.13, IV.16, IV.20, V.13 and VI.12.

16. Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad II 14-15. in Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 723.

17. See for example the following passages: 13.18, 14.2 and 18.55.

18. For example Srī Bhāṣya (3.4.26) reads as follows:

What we have to understand by knowledge is this connection which has been repeatedly explained, viz., a mental energy different from mere cognition of the sense of the texts, and more specifically denoted by such terms as dhyana or upasana. i.e., meditation, which is of the nature of remembrance.

(Quoted from Dhavamony, "Hindu Meditation", p. 158).

In this passage "remembrance" carries the same meaning as bhakti and also means upāsana (meditation). Refer also to Srī Bhāṣya 1.1.1.

19. It is, however, in the Vedārtha Saṁgraha (paragraphs 91-92) that the link between bhakti and meditation is explicitly stated. Here we read that:

When (the devotee) throws himself with all that he has at the lotus feet of the supreme Person, then he will be able to attain the supreme Person through his devotion which takes the form of a direct vision of supreme clarity. Devotion is a kind of knowledge. (Quoted from E.T. Lott, "The Conceptual Dimensions of Bhakti in the Rāmānuja Tradition", in The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies 5 (1981), p. 99).

20. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 13.

21. The other three so-called principles are the will of God, the principle of non-violence and the importance of the Satgurū. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II pp. 13-14. How these so-called principles relate to each other we are not told. Their significance can only be assumed in so far as they represent the principles of Bhāṇā, prem and gurūbhakti.

22. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 13.

23. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 13.

24. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 11. The exact source from which Tulsī Dās is quoted is not cited.

25. See for example chapter 6.31 which reads:

Who standing firm on unity participates in
communes-in-love
belongs to Me

as abiding in all beings, in whatever state he be,

that

integrated man
athlete of the spirit abides in Me.

(Quoted from Zaehner, The Bhagavad Gita, p. 235).

26. Chapter II. 14 reads:

Even as a mirror stained by dust shines brightly
when it has been cleaned, so the embodied one
when he has seen the (real) nature of the
Self becomes integrated, of fulfilled purpose
and freed from sorrow.

(Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads, p. 723).

27. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 2. see also Vol IV p. 9 of the same volume.

28. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 9.

29. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 10.

30. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p 10. Here Bābā Sawan Singh probably means chapter 8.8 and 15.4 of the Bhagavad Gītā.

31. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 8.

32. See for Chapter 4.10 for instance.

33. R.C. Zaehner, The Catholic Church and World Religions (London, 1964), p.37

34. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 108.

35. See Dwyer, Bhakti in Kabīr p. 198.

36. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p xvi.

37. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p 113.

38. Gurmat Siddhant Vol II p 107.

39. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 108.
40. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 99.
41. Our interpretation of Āl-Hāllaj's creation theory is based on R. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge, 1967), p. 80.
42. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 99.
43. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 174.
44. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II pp. xiii-xiv.
45. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. xvii.
46. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 109.
47. Jalāl Al-Dīn Rūmī's teachings on the nature of love are summarized by S. Padmanabhan, "The Poetic Mysticism of Jalāl Al-Dīn Rūmī. An Inquiry", in Muslim World 1 (1981), pp. 206-208.
48. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. xiii.
49. See chapter 15.19.
50. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 109.
51. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 52.
52. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III, p. 49.
53. Bābā Sawan Singh prefers the term birah (in Hindi, birhā) instead of the Sanskrit virah. For the sake of accuracy we shall use birah when referring to Bābā Sawan Singh and virah otherwise.
54. Callaewart, The Sarvāṅgī of the Dādūpanthī Rajab, p. 323.
55. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 75.
56. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 76.
57. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 76.
58. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 75.
59. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 92.
60. For a discussion of Rāmānuja's notion of virah see J. A. B. van Buitenen, Rāmānuja and the Bhagavad Gītā: (A condensed rendering of his Gītābhāṣya) (New Delhi, 1968).
61. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 95.

62. Translated as Sabdavalī Pt. II Latke 6, p 107 in Puri and Sethi, Tulsi Sahib. Saint of Hathras pp. 114-115.

63. In its most general sense, *ishq* describes the irresistible desire for the company of God, often accompanied by feelings of anguish at being separated from Him. Refer to C. S. White, "Sufism in Medieval Hindi Literature", in History of Religions 5 (1965), p. 120 for a somewhat similar understanding of the term *ishq*.

64. Bābā Sawan Singh, for example speaks of the lamenting devotee in the feminine gender:

A soul that is filled with love for the
Lord does not, without Him, care for the
finest silk, or satin, but when she is in
communion with Him, she is prepared to
sleep even in the dust.

(Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 81)

65. In the Gurmat Siddhānt (Vol. II p. 75) we read of *bireh* as a "stabbing pain in the heart", causing "inner anguish".

66. For a brief survey of the concept of grace in the Hindu tradition see T. Manickam, "Grace. The Stream of Divine Life for Man in the Bhakti Tradition", in Journal of Dharma 12 (1987), pp. 405-415.

67. In Rādhāsoāmī literature the Sanskrit term *dayā* (sympathy, compassion, kindness or mercy) is usually used to denote grace. In the Gurmat Siddhānt, however, the term used is *prasād*.

68. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 56. See also p. 57 of the same volume.

69. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 57.

70. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 56. Harchand Singh, writing about the relationship of human effort to divine grace in the Sikh scriptures, echoes the view held by Bābā Sawan Singh when he observes that:

Salvation is the fruit of faith, conduct
and grace and not a result of the arbitrary
Will of the Lord. It is conditioned by the
quality of human devotion and deed.

("The Only Way with a Difference: The Sikh View of
Salvation", in The Sikh Review 33 (1981), p. 64).

71. In Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Rādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry) a total of eight chapters are dedicated to *gurūbhakti*. Refer to pp. 255-516.

72. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 19. See also p. 20 of the same volume. Shiv Dayāl Singh goes even further by equating *gurūbhakti* with Sant

Mat. See Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Rādhāsoamī Part 1 (Poetry) Bachan 12 Shabd 1 (2), p. 255.

73. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. xii.

74. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 31. Juergensmeyer argues that in Sikhism, devotion to the Satgurū is equated with devotion to God because the Satgurū becomes the visible symbol of worship of the One (i.e. God) who cannot be worshipped because He is without qualities. See M. Juergensmeyer, "Patterns of Pluralism: Sikh Relations with Radhasoami", in J.T. O'Connell, M. Israel and others (eds.), Sikh Religion and History in the Twentieth Century (Toronto, 1988), p. 63. This line of reasoning could safely be applied to the Gurmat Siddhānt to explain why gurūbhakti is equated with devotion to God.

75. Quoted from Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanisads p. 150.

76. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 21.

77. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. II p. 34.

78. See Cole, The Guru in Sikhism p. 50.

79. See McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism p. 66.

80. This definition of the term satsanga is given by Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, p. 242.

81. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii.

82. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 121.

83. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 127.

84. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 113.

85. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xlv1.

86. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 131. This is actually a passage taken from the teachings of Sahjō Bhāf.

87. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xlv1.

88. See for example sākhi 207 in L. Hess and S. Singh, The Bīlak of Kabīr, p. 114.

89. See for example, Śrī Nāndev Gāthā (passages 832 and 863).

90. Sūr Dās speaks of satsaṅg as sādha-saṁāgama or santa-saṁāgama. He is referring here to the good company of the Satgurū without whose presence satsaṅg would be meaningless. See J.S. Hawley, "The Sant in Sur Das", in Schomer and McLeod, The Sants Studies in a Devotional

Tradition of India, p. 103. Brief mention is made here of the spiritual importance Sur Dās attaches to attending satsaṅg.

91. In Tulsī Sāhib's verses we come across repeated references to the spiritual significance of satsaṅg. We are referring here to passages from Ratan Sāgar, pp 23-25 and 123, and also Sabdōvalī Pt. I Kundlī 10, p 36. These appear on pp. 34-38 and 39 of Puri and Sethi, Tulsī Sāhib. Saint of Hathras. The emphasis here is mainly on the belief that attending satsaṅg results in a purification of the mind. Bābā Sawan Singh tends also to concentrate on this theme.

92. See D. Eck, Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India (Chambersburg, 1981), p. 6.

93. An interesting sociological study of how darśan operates on all these levels at Rādhāsoāmī satsaṅgs appears in L. Dupertuis, "How People Recognize Charisma: The Case of Darshan in Radhasoami and Divine Light Mission", in Sociological Analysis 47 (1986), pp. 111-124.

94. We have based our interpretation on Eck's Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India which remains an important study of the phenomenon of gaze fixation in the Hindu tradition.

95. See Babb, "Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism", p. 77. Babb has done extensive research at Soāmī Bāgh.

96. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. 156-157.

97. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 113.

98. See Babb, "Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism", p. 79.

99. See Eck, Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India, p. 5.

100. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xxx.

101. S. Kakar, "Psychoanalysis and Religious Healing: Siblings or Strangers", in Journal of the American Academy of Religion 4 (1985), p. 846.

102. For a detailed documentation of the concept of gurūsevā in the Hindu tradition see Steinmann, Gurū-Siṣya Sambhanda. Das Meister-Schüler Verhältnis im Traditionellen und Modernen Hinduismus, pp. 55-56, 81-84 and 233-234.

103. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. xli.

104. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. I p. 3. The concept of physical sevā in the Gurmat Siddhānt will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

105. See Babb, Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition, pp. 67-71 for details of gurū worship at Soāmī Bāgh.

106. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 4. In the Ādi Granth it is not uncommon to come across the idea of the devotee surrendering himself, mind and soul to the gurū. See for example, Sorath M 5 p 616 and Āsa M 3 p 423.

107. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xliii. See also pp. 4 and 10 of the same volume. What is being said here is a repetition of what appears in Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Kādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry) Bachan 13 Shabd 3 (6-7), p. 269.

108. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xli. See also p. 10. of the same volume.

109. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 11.

110. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xxxii.

111. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. xliii.

112. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 6.

113. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 20.

114. The term sarana carries three specific meanings, a) a place where a person becomes free of all suffering b) the very act of seeking refuge and c) the person in whom the refuge is sought. The term is often seen in the context of Rāmānuja's Saranagati-vidyā (doctrine of refuge). See D Grierson, "Prappati-Marga", in Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. 10 (Edinburgh, 1930), p. 15.

115. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 19.

116. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 35.

117. See Gupta, A Critical Study of the Philosophy of Rāmānuja, p. 141.

In the poems of the Gadyatraya (i.e. the Saranagatigadya, the Srianagadya and the Śrīvaikunthagadya) absolute surrender at the feet of the gurū is seen as the sole means of salvation. See R.C. Lester, "Rāmānuja and Śrī Vaiṣṇavism: The Concept of Prappati or Saranagati", in History of Religions 5 (1966), pp. 262-282 for an analysis of the contents of Rāmānuja's Gadyatraya.

118. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 144.

119. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 160.

120. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 33.

121. There are a number of references to the dust of the Satgurū's feet in Maheshwari, Sār Bachan Kādhāsoāmī Part I (Poetry). See Bachan 18 Shabd 1 (6), pp. 329-339 and Bachan 19 Shabd (1-21), pp. 349-380.

122. See J. S. Kaur, Sikh Revivalist Movements. The Nirankari and Namdhari Movements in Punjab in the Nineteenth Century. (New Delhi, 1988), p. 51.

123. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 44.

124. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 30.

125. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 37.

126. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 37. (Translated as M 5 Ram Kali 915-14).

127. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 39. (Translated as M 5 Gauri 204-31).

128. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 30. (Translated as M 5 Sri Rag 52-19).

129. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 46.

130. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 46. (Translated as Kabit Sawwaye 416).

131. Strictly speaking the Sanskrit term vairāg (vairāgya) means "absence or suppression of worldly passions and affections". See D. Forbes, A Smaller Hindustani and English Dictionary (London, no date given), p. 465.

132. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 248. In Sikh terminology vairag means "dispassion towards the material world and its concerns". See G. S. Talib, "The Basis and Development of Ethical Thought in Sikhism", in F. Singh, Sikhism (Patiala, 1969), p. 78.

133. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 244.

134. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 247.

135. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. II p. 250. See also p. 247 of the same volume.

136. See for example, chapters 3.4., 3.30, 5.6, 6.1, 18.2 and 18.66.

137. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 18.

138. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p. 23.

139. It is said of Babuji Mahārāj, the last Satgurū of the Soamī Bāgh line that he suffered from a mild skin disease. He is said to have taken this ailment unto himself from a female devotee. See Babb, Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition, p. 66.

140. This belief is clearly reflected in the following verses attributed to Shiv Dayāl Singh:

I place Bhog (food) before Radhasoami
I have prepared dishes and dressed food
with Ami-ras (ambrosia).

Drums resound at Gagan Shikhar as
Radhasoami partakes of Bhog (food).

Radhasoami has swallowed Kal and Karam
in the twinkling of an eye. Radhasoami
is Omnipotent.

Never was such a Bhog (the partaking of food)
witnessed. Radhasoami has eaten up all.

(Maheshwari, Sar Bachan Radhasoami Part II Bachan
42 Shabd 4 (1-41) p. 511).

CHAPTER VII

ETHICS IN THE GURMAT SIDDHANT

Introduction

Bābā Sawan Singh's ethical thought rests on the assertion that spiritual discipline is inadequate in itself. It only becomes meaningful when the aspirant begins to adhere to the tenets of rightful living. Meditation must be accompanied by ethical living. For him a life without ethical ideals is a life without purpose, a life dictated by impulsive needs and desires. At this level life is base and uncultivated; it is that of the unregenerate man.

In the Gurmat Siddhant all norms of personal and social ethics are derived from the metaphysical belief that man is created in God's image. They are also based on the conviction that human life provides the golden opportunity to be devoted to God. Since God is the supreme truth and the entire creation is but a manifestation of this truth, then, as Bābā Sawan Singh sees it, all life should be centred around or devoted to truthful living.

This chapter examines Bābā Sawan Singh's ethical thought. It will examine the relationship between moral action and God realization; provide a definition of the unregenerate and God-centred individual; and examine what is said about the self-centred person in contrast to the concept of the God-centred individual. The character of Bābā

Sawan Singh's code of ethics will also be analyzed and will be followed by a definition of the term dharma as used in the Gurmat Siddhānt. Bābā Sawan Singh's catalogue of personal and social values will be looked at including the concepts of truthfulness, compassion, humility, cleanliness, contentment, continence and service.

Ethics and Self-Transformation

Bābā Sawan Singh does not consider ethics to be independent of the idea of God. He speaks of ethics as "the religion of humanity". (1) He suggests that in order to know God and attain union with Him the aspirant must cultivate spiritual virtues and social values. We are led to believe that only moral actions can lead to happiness and that liberation is possible only through ethical living.

In order to know the mystery of life it is stressed in the Gurmat Siddhānt that the aspirant has to realize his ability to do good. Ethical behaviour is promulgated as the primary principle of a spiritually oriented life. The aspirant has to choose and decide between what is virtuous and what is not. It is this commitment to right action that distinguishes man from the lower forms of life. (2)

This understanding of ethics is important in so far as it shows the urgency with which the need for right action is stressed. This in turn is based on the philosophy that the world is an abode of righteousness. It is a place in which one should avoid doing evil; it

is also a place which affords the opportunity to take positive moral action for spiritual upliftment.

For Bābā Sawan Singh the means of escaping transmigration involves the living of an ethical life in accordance with the principles of Sant Mat, something which we are reminded of in the Gurmat Siddhānt:

Sant Mat gives true guidance, both in wordly and spiritual matters, and while strengthening the human virtues, turns his thought to his Lord and takes him to Him. (3)

Furthermore, it must be clear to the aspirant that it is he and he alone who determines the quality of his ethical behaviour. In so doing he earns himself the right to be called a man. Bābā Sawan Singh leaves no doubts in our minds that one can truly be called human only if one aspires to do good. He writes:

The man in whom the desire to know the mystery of Life has awakened, he first has to be a man. A man should possess the high virtues of being a human being. Otherwise he cannot be called a man by simply having the form of a man or dressing like a man or behaving like him. There are many human robots but there are few who have virtues special to a human being. They are called the top of creation because of human virtues. A man devoid of human virtues is worse than an animal. It was owing to these human virtues that he was considered higher in rank than anybody else and they were asked to worship him. He was therefore called His representative. He who is devoid of human virtues is really an animal in human form. It is therefore necessary that he should be a man of principles. This should be his idéal. This is the working principle. The highest duty of man is to imbibe human virtues. (4)

The desire to effect a qualitative improvement in the tone and tenor of human life appears here to be Bābā Sawan Singh's main concern. No spiritual progress whatsoever can be achieved so long as the aspirant is beguiled by the attractions of the external world. What is required is an inner revolution of the mind and the heart. While the aspirant is still slave to such tendencies as lust, greed, attachment, anger and pride, (5) salvation remains an impossibility. A change in orientation and focus is needed from a predominantly worldly orientation to a dwelling upon the divine mysteries of God. The psycho-spiritual transformation of the aspirant from the state of being a self-centred individual or manmukh (6) to that of a God-centred individual or gurmukh (7) stands in the centre of the ethics of the Gurmant Siddhānt. It is, therefore appropriate to enquire as to what Bābā Sawan Singh means by a self-centred and God-centred person.

The Concept of the Self-Centred Individual

Bābā Sawan Singh's perception of the nature of man is influenced by the belief that man's nature is coloured by his weaknesses. What then is the nature of unregenerate man? The Gurmant Siddhānt offers no clear cut answer. All we are furnished with is a set of qualities that differentiate the manmukh from the gurmukh. Bābā Sawan Singh notes that the qualities displayed by the gurmukh are certainly those which are not possessed by the manmukh (unregenerate man):

Man can be called man only if he has the quality of humanity in him that is, if he treats man as his brother, shares his troubles, has compassion in his heart and has profound love for the Lord and His creation. If instead, he harbours jealousy, cruelty, neglect of duties, back biting, enmity, greed, desire, hypocrisy, ill-feelings, intolerance, dogmatism and so forth, how can the mirror of the heart be clean? By indulging in these tendencies the happiness of human life and its sweetness vanish. How can one see the Lord in the mirror of his heart when it is soiled with evil tendencies? (8)

The view being posited here is that spiritual emancipation is dependent upon an inner transformation, from "one who obeys the dictates of his mind" (9) to "one who completely surrenders himself to the Guru". (10) He believes that so long as one remains under the influence of the mind, is self-centred and attached to this illusory world there can be no escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In order to truly understand what Bābā Sawan Singh means by manmukh we must necessarily look at what he has to say about the workings of the mind, self-centredness and the material world.

The Concept of the Mind

Although Bābā Sawan Singh prefers to stick to the English term mind (11) in the Gurmat Siddhānt, he probably has the term man as used in the Ādi Granth in mind, for which it has been argued, there is no satisfactory English equivalent. (12) He loosely uses the term mind to indicate inner sense as earlier indicated in this study. (13) Bābā

Sawan Singh would probably view the mind as that faculty which thinks, decides and feels and is the source of all human good and evil.

He views the mind not as an intrinsically sinful entity. It is however, something which is given to avaricious attraction, false desires and wordly inclination. It is thought that the mind of the manmukh does not focus its attention upon the deeper realities of life. As a consequence the manmukh is deluded about the nature of the world and God. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the deluded manmukh is seen as constantly hiding from the truth:

The mind of an untruthful man is never calm and is always planning and scheming lest the reality become known. Without truth there can be no remembrance of the Lord and there can be no devotion without awe. If there is a veil between the iron and the touchstone, how can the iron turn into gold. By not describing the fact as it is, the veil between us and the truth becomes thick and it becomes impossible to realise the truth. The heart of an untruthful person experiences it in a particular manner. The mind wants to represent it in another way. He hides the truth and describes it differently. He indulges in sin secretly and deliberately turns his back on the Lord: (14)

It is being suggested here that salvation is impossible so long as the mind remains in the condition of untruth. This does not mean that the mind is to be annihilated. What is being said is that it must be restrained by curbing its erratic tendencies. The manmukh is warned not to remain enslaved by uncontrolled passions but to realize that

the mind is the potential dwelling place of God. If the mind harbours the truth, it also harbours God. This we are told in the following passage:

There is no austerity like the truth,
and no sin like the untruth. He who has
truth in his mind, the Lord Himself dwells
in him. (15)

Bābā Sawan Singh is quite specific about the means which must be employed in order that the mind be brought under control. He reminds the aspirant to devote himself wholeheartedly to the teachings of Sant Mat. (16) He also views the mind as being capable of demonstrating tremendous psychological and spiritual strength if its energies are directed towards the contemplation of the divine Name. (17) In the Gurmat Siddhānt we are repeatedly told that it is essential to seek God in everything we do. In this way the mind will be steeped in God's greatness. (18)

The Concept of Self-Centredness

For the manmukh the dominant impulse is that of self-centredness. (19) Bābā Sawan Singh speaks of self-centredness in terms of the ego and pride (20) which he sees as controlling the mind of the manmukh and so determining his pattern of life. The results are disastrous. Instead of being led to release and salvation the manmukh finds that his self-centredness causes God to be alienated from him. This we are told in the following passage:

Egoism and pride is not liked by the Lord. He showers His grace on those whose mind is full of humility and meekness. Water does not gather at the top of hills but flows down and accumulates there. He who bends drinks water but he who holds his head high remains thirsty. (21)

Everything a manmukh does seems to be carried out in the context of his self-centred condition. Even that which one terms right or good is performed only if it accords with his self-centredness. The manmukh's loyalty is to himself alone, to the wayward impulses of his own mind. He is not attuned to the voice of God. The manmukh is said, therefore, to have ignored truth and chosen falsehood instead. The fate of such a being must surely be certain death. (22) This is because living according to the dictates of the ego means being totally attached to the material world, which, in the final analysis, is nothing but a delusion. The failure of the manmukh to recognize the unity of all life and the pre-eminence of God is what leads to all the personal, social and political problems that bedevil human existence.

The Concept of Illusion

When discussing the self-centred manmukh who is absorbed in worldly attractions Bābā Sawan Singh uses the term māyā, not in the classical Vedantist sense as explained earlier on in the study. (23) Unlike the Vedantist, he does not deny the reality of the phenomenal world. The material world (24) is indeed māyā but not because it is unreal. It is considered an illusion only in the sense that the manmukh believes

it to be the only and ultimate reality, which it is not. Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of māyā rests on the conviction that the world is impermanent. The manmukh, however, accepts the material world as being ultimately real and is thus guilty of self-deception. Since this world is subject to dissolution, attachment to it, cannot, therefore, mean attachment to the ultimate truth. It is this attachment to the temporal world that prevents the manmukh from realizing the true nature of the world and the ultimate reality of God. (25)

Worldly attachment is also considered to be a form of illusion in that it is viewed as evidence of a misinterpretation of the nature and purpose of creation. The creation of the universe is seen by Bābā Sawan Singh to be both a revelation of God and at the same time a sort of trap. But what matters here is how the manmukh responds to the material world. If he were to perceive the material world as a revelation of God he would have understood the purpose of creation and the mystery of life accurately. If, on the other hand, he regards the world as an arena for the satisfaction of his desires, he is on the road to ruin. According to Bābā Sawan Singh the manmukh makes the wrong response.

In the context of Bābā Sawan Singh's ethics the world cannot and must not be viewed as a total illusion for the following reason. The shaping of an ethical life is a struggle in the real world. To deny its existence would mean to deny the need for such a struggle, something the Gurmāt Siddhānt rejects. Bābā Sawan Singh shares with Gurū Nānak the belief that this world is a place in which one should

take the opportunity to take positive moral action. Like Gurū Nānak he sees the world as an abode of positive action. The world is the place where the fruits of right action or wrong doing are reaped. Gurū Nānak speaks of the world as dharmśāl or the abode of righteousness. (26)

The Concept of the God-Centred Individual

Bābā Sawan Singh calls the gurmukh "a devotee of the Lord" and says that :

Such a devotee completely surrenders himself to the Guru and becomes one with him in exactly the same manner as water merges into water. (27)

The gurmukh is seen here very much in Sikh terms. He is the person who feels an inner need to discern the nature of the divine order. He is one who obeys the will of God voiced through the Satgurū.

Although the term gurmukh is a term Bābā Sawan Singh borrows from the Sikh scriptures he does not use it with the same rigor or detail as some Sikh Gurūs have done. In the Bhaktaratnāvalī, for instance, Gurū Gobind Singh reports Gurū Arjan as explaining that there is a hierarchy of three levels of gurmukh. There is firstly the gurmukh who does good to those who do good unto him and returns evil for evil. Next comes the gurmukhtar who turns his back on evil deeds and his face towards the Satgurū. One step higher is the gurmukhtam, the true devotee and the ultimate embodiment of all that is virtuous. (28)

Bābā Sawan Singh appears to use the term gurmukh in a sense in which Gurū Arjan would speak of the gurmukhtam.

Bābā Sawan Singh's use of the term gurmukh is also evident in the way in which he chooses to present the term. While the Gurmat Siddhānt speaks simply of the gurmukh, the Ādi Granth, on the other hand refers to an evolving gurmukh. In the Ādi Granth mention is made of a number of stages that one has to go through before becoming a gurmukh. (29) Bābā Sawan Singh makes no reference to such stages in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

In conclusion the individual who follows the dictates of his mind and is grounded in self-centredness is one who is psychologically maimed and out of tune with spiritual reality. The only option open to the manmukh is to initiate a transformation within himself and to strive to become a gurmukh. This calls for an adherence to moral behaviour or to a code of ethics.

Bābā Sawan Singh's Code of Ethics

Ethical codes are a prominent feature of Hindu literature. (30) Bābā Sawan Singh, however, bases his ethical thought on the religious tenets of the Ādi Granth and the Sikh code of ethics. In the first stanza of the Japjī we find Gurū Nanak exhorting the aspirant for the good life to live in accordance with the truth via remembrance of the divine Name. This is designed to bring him into harmony with God.

However, meditation is meaningless if it is not accompanied by a pure, moral life. For Gurū Nānak a life of positive virtue is an integral part of the individual's pilgrimage towards salvation. Bābā Sawan Singh shares this conviction and proclaims that:

One who is truthful and contented and
speaks the truth is dear to the Lord.
He never suffers separation from Him.
Truth has nothing to fear. It is not
affected by curses nor can Kal harm
it. When a true devotee meets the
Truth (Lord), he merges in it. (31)

Like Gurū Nānak Bābā Sawan Singh sees that every man is plagued by the evils of Kāl, expressed in the form of lust, greed, anger attachment and pride. These five evils persistently haunt the aspirant for the good life. Only if he places his trust in God and the Satgurū can he hope to overcome them and conquer his weaknesses and bad karma.

Bābā Sawan Singh's code of ethics can be defined as a doctrine of values found not only in the Adi Granth but also in the various Sikh ethical codes. These include the Rahitnāmās, (32) the Sikh Maryādā, (33) and the Janam Sakhīā, (34) Other secondary texts include Gurū Pratap Surai Granth edited by Bhāī Santokh Singh, the Gurūbilas edited by Bhai Sukhe Singh and the Gurūsobha edited by Kavi Senapat, a court bard of Gurū Gobind Singh. (35)

Though it is safe to assume that Bābā Sawan Singh does take into account the various Sikh ethical codes, he does so only where these do not appear to be in conflict with the teachings of the Adi Granth. This explains why he ignores orthodox Sikh injunctions dealing with

devotional practice and religious ceremonies, features that are related to later institutionalized Sikhism and are not mentioned in the Ādi Granth. As far as the Sikh Rehat Maryādā is concerned, Bābā Sawan Singh would feel comfortable with Part III of Section I and Section, II of this code which deals exclusively with the role of social service or sevā.

Bābā Sawan Singh would argue that the orthodox Sikh code of conduct is based fundamentally on the Ādi Granth. Being primarily interested in extracting from the Ādi Granth ethical teachings that are intertwined with metaphysical and religious declarations, he would argue that injunctions concerning rituals do not feature in the Ādi Granth. In this matter he would agree with McLeod about the relationship of the religious tenets of the Ādi Granth to the present day Sikh codes of ethics. McLeod writes:

As in all aspects of Sikh religion the obvious source is the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture compiled by the fifth Guru in 1603-1604. The Guru Granth Sahib communicates little impression of the outward features so characteristic of the modern Sikh and one will look in vain for mandatory instructions concerning uncut hair, turbans and daggers. It does, however provide the essential foundation of Sikh ethics. (36)

By claiming that Bābā Sawan Singh bases his code of ethics almost exclusively on the teachings of the Ādi Granth, we are saying that as far as the philosophical basis of his ethical thought is concerned he believes that God is the ultimate value. To attain of this ultimate value, which is blissful and all satisfying, it is necessary for him

to base his life on an ethical code. In the Gurmat Siddhant this takes the form of a catalogue of personal and social values. These are truthfulness, compassion, humility, cleanliness, contentment, continence and service. A careful examination of this list will now reveal how close Bābā Sawan Singh comes to duplicating the list of values often associated with what is called the Sikh value system. (37) Before examining the catalogue drawn up by Bābā Sawan Singh we will first examine the manner in which the principle of dharma is presented in the Gurmat Siddhant.

The Concept of Dharma

It is through the concept of dharma which is basic to the structure of Hindu ethics that Bābā Sawan Singh expounds his ideas on ethical behaviour. The term dharma is used in the different schools and religious traditions of Indian thought. (38) Generally, however, it would not be inaccurate to propose that dharma implies either a principle or a set of rules or codified scheme of conduct. (39)

Bābā Sawan Singh begins his discourse on dharma by disclosing what is a well-known fact about the etymological root of the term. He explains:

The word "Dharma" is from the root "Dharī" which means to adopt or to sustain. The principle which sustains the entire universe and keeps it in equilibrium is Dharma. (40)

He is correct in so far as *dhṛ* (and not *dhari*) in its widest sense refers to that which sustains and holds together the universe. However, what he does not explain is that *dharma* as the cosmic principle is a function of the root *ṛta*. Creel, for example explains that:

The Indo-European concept *ṛta*, which expressed a view of an embracing cosmic order, both moral and physical, contributed significantly to the connotation of *dharma*, with the understanding of *ṛta* virtually absorbed into the meaning of *dharma*. (41)

In its broadest sense also Bābā Sawan Singh sees *dharma* as representing the ethical laws of the universe which regulate moral life in the same way as the laws of nature govern the physical world. The world is moral because it is a divine creation. It is a world of divine and spiritual immanence with the fullest reality of moral values being the divine omnipresence of God.

In reminding us of the meaning of *dharma* as the cosmic principle Bābā Sawan Singh is in actual fact echoing a definition associated with the Rāmāyana. In the Rāmāyana (2.14.7, 2.21.41) *dharma* functions as the cosmic order which is the essence of all things. *Dharma* is seen here as sustaining the world and as the goal of human life. *Dharma* is the ideal of the world. What is true is *dharma* and what is *dharma* is true. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we find Bābā Sawan Singh thinking about *dharma* along the same lines. He chooses to call truth "the first foot of *Dharma*" (42) and "constituent of *Dharma*" (43) respectively.

Bābā Sawan Singh conceives dharma as indicating the ontological foundation of morality. This ontological dimension of dharma is evident from its Sanskrit root dhr which denotes as we have seen that which sustains the universe. It indicates the cosmic order which imposes upon the dharmātma (44) a universal norm or principle. He is therefore saying that morality is woven into the very structure of reality. Dharma is taken to mean that which establishes a proper code of morality in the universe. He also argues that the cosmic dimension of dharma provides a certain sense of ethical objectivity. It is indicative of the independent status of the concept of moral goodness. Morality is not understood in purely individualistic terms. On the contrary, it is seen in the Gurmat Siddhant as also having a wider universal meaning. The fact that dharma is conceived of as the universal principle underlying morality means that dharma is eternal. It is what unifies and sustains humanity. It expresses the essential nature of the universe and whoever does not adhere to it must be considered out of tune with the essence of the universe.

Apart from seeing dharma as a cosmic principle Bābā Sawan Singh also sees it as relating to deeds required to integrate or establish a proper order within man himself and society. He speaks of dharma in terms of duties and sees the fulfillment of moral duties as being an integral part of dharma. By the fulfillment of moral duties is meant the adopting of such behaviour which is deemed to be morally good. Bābā Sawan Singh sees man in God's image. He believes that man's highest duty is to realize moral perfection by living an ethical life

according to the principles of dharma which might be called dharmic behaviour. (45)

By dharmic behaviour is meant living according to such values that provide moral guidance which, in turn, provides the basis upon which spirituality is achieved. In the words of one scholar, dharmic behaviour means living according to "a principle of reference to which the quality of life can be valued". (46) Bābā Sawan Singh then sees dharma very much in terms of ethical behaviour. He calls dharma:

the practical Science of good conduct
concerned with an enquiry into the
nature of good or moral value and the
chief modes of its realisation in
practical life. (47)

However, his idea of ethical oriented behaviour or moral duty is not one which should be associated with the traditional Vedic conception of dharma. The Vedic idea of dharma applies to behavioural injunctions bound by clan and caste duties. In other words duty in the Gurmat Siddhānt is not defined in the context of the varṇāśrama-dharma doctrine. It is necessary to view Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas about right conduct more in terms of sādharma-dharma.

Hindu dharma is tridimensional. Social duties are classified as āśrama-dharma, varṇa-dharma and sādharma-dharma. Āśrama-dharma involves the performance of duties according to the traditional classical Hindu classification of the four modes of life. (48) Varṇa-dharma relates to duties relative to one's station in life. (49)

Sādhārana-dharma refers to duties common to all men irrespective of class or station in life. (50) The āśrama scheme provides the framework within which an individual may express the total needs of his personality. These needs are incorporated into the doctrine of puruṣārthas or the four ends of life.

The theory of the four puruṣārthas perceives the human personality as a complex organism. It recognizes an empirical side to life, represented by the three puruṣārthas relating to natural desires and social aims. Man is conceived as having a natural craving for sex and feeling the need for power and the realization of common good. It also recognizes a spiritual side to life marked by otherworldly needs. (51) It is these spiritual needs that are central to Bābā Sawan Singh's thinking about ethics. His central concern is to formulate a code of behavior that will ensure that the path to spiritual liberation is well paved. In the following sections we turn our attention to what is said in the Gurmat Siddhānt about the principles of moral behaviour. We shall examine Bābā Sawan Singh's code of conduct pertaining to self-purification and social welfare.

The Principle of Truthfulness

Bābā Sawan Singh begins his discourse on the principle of satya vachan (52) by informing his readers about what truth means and explains:

Satya means truth - a thing which is eternal and not perishable. The same meanings have been assigned to it in

the Vedas "that which is not destroyed in the three divisions of time". By the Gurus, "Sat" or "Satya" has been used for a Being which existed before the beginning of the universe, at its beginning, and will exist forever. It has been used for Sat Purush (eternal being). Truth is His quality. God is truth. (53)

He then proceeds to explain that:

To have a truthful life is the goal of human life. Truth is everywhere. It should be separated from untruth and experienced inside. The heart wherein it dwells also takes its form. God truth. (54)

Bābā Sawan Singh commences then with the proposition that truth is in itself beginningless and endless. It is also the beginning and end of all virtues. Truth is perfect and to be truthful is to strive for perfection. The love of truth is taken here to mean love for perfection. This in turn implies love of God since He alone is perfect. Since God is truth and truth is God, truthfulness, we are made to understand, must be the paramount virtue that the aspirant should strive to attain. Truthfulness is only attainable by living a moral life, sanctified by meditation. Truthful living, therefore, means responding to the inner voice of God by obeying the commandments of the Satgurū.

According to the Gurmat Siddhānt dharma is truth since it is the expression of God's moral order on earth. Hence truth is a basic virtue and so is truthful living. In other words there is no dharma that does not embody truth or truthfulness and there is no truth in which there is no

order or law. If dharma is the goal of human life, then truth must be that which sustains the world. (55)

For Bābā Sawan Singh truthfulness means the correspondence of word, thought and deed. Satya implies two things in the Gurnat Siddhānt. Firstly it implies that the object as ascertained by valid proof is correctly conveyed. It also means that one's own ideas are faithfully conveyed with no intention of deceiving. This, however, is not a virtue adhered to by an untruthful person. In the following passage we are provided with an insight into what Bābā Sawan Singh perceives as falsehood:

The opposite of truth is untruth. Not to relate what one has seen or heard or done is called falsehood. A false person is a hypocrite. He looks with his eyes down and has no light in his face. He is always planning and scheming. He is always afraid that his falsehood may be detected. In order to hide one lie he has recourse to hundreds of them. He loses his peace of mind in scheming all the while. Doubts and suspicion become his second nature. He accordingly trusts no one. His relationship with others is based on selfishness. He is not confided in by anyone owing to his conduct, nor does he confide in anyone. Deceit, fraud, hypocrisy, and cunning become staple food of his life. (56)

In the Gurnat Siddhānt the manmukh is also viewed as the one who, because of his untruthfulness, turns his back on God. By being untruthful and "a devotee of the mind" he is full of nothing but deceit. For such a person there is little hope, as we learn from the following statement:

Without truth there can be no remembrance of the Lord and there can be no devotion without awe. If there is a veil between the iron and the touchstone, how can the iron turn into gold. By not describing the fact as it is, the veil between us and the truth becomes

thick and it becomes impossible to realise the truth. The heart of an untruthful person experiences it in a particular way. He hides the truth and describes it differently. He indulges in sin and deliberately turns his back on the Lord. (57)

The Principle of Compassion

Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of dayā or compassion is a straightforward one and is presented in the following manner:

Compassion means mercy, grace, sympathy and kindness. When one sees the suffering of a person, one's heart bleeds and he is really sorry for his suffering, then one is said to have compassion. A compassionate person cannot bear the sight of the sufferings of another and shares his misery involuntarily. He tries to alleviate his sufferings by all means and does not feel at ease till this is done. (58)

The thinking behind this statement could be open to the following interpretation. As compassion is the light of God, the true devotee realizes the true nature of God by showing mercy and sympathy to the suffering. It is only a compassionate heart that can house true love for the Lord. Compassion is seen as that quality of selflessness expressed through love and kindness, both qualities being integral to a life of God-centredness. In the final analysis it is by loving one's fellow beings that one is able to ignite God's love within one's own inner being. In the Gurmat Siddhant this sentiment is expressed in the following passage:

The soul that takes on the hue of the Lord awakes in the inner soul and has compassion for all beings and treats all compassionately.

It has a friendly feeling for all and loves them. (59)

In the Gurnat Siddhant we are told that it is the compassionate person who generates love, forgiveness and goodwill. It is the gurmukh who truly demonstrates this expression of God's love for all creation and lives up to the name of dharmātma. This is spelt out in the following passages. It is to be noted that in the second passage Bābā Sawan Singh uses the term dharma to mean duty. The first passage reads as follows:

The compassionate person has an aura of bliss about him. He has a shining forehead, kind and merciful eyes and a sympathetic look. He gives his heart to the depressed and suffering persons. His sweet words act like healing showers on thirsty and parched hearts. He can be called a man in the real sense of the term. (60)

Only a compassionate man can be Dharmatma (high-souled one). Patience and forgiveness are born of compassion. When there is no compassion, there is no Dharma or forgiveness. Compassion and Dharma (duty) are strongly interconnected. As long as there is compassion, godly virtues like dharma, truth, contentment, forgiveness and patience remain. (61)

The compassionate man, we are told is the one who:

sees the Lord as pervading all, controls the senses, listens to the melody of Nam, practices contentment and has compassion for all living beings. (62)

This, in actual fact is a paraphrase of a passage from the Adi Granth which in the Gurnat Siddhant is translated as follows:

When on the day of Ekadashi one sees the Lord
in every direction,
When he controls the senses and listens to Lord's
Name,
When he is content in his mind and showers
compassion
on all living beings,
Then, in this way his vows are fulfilled. (63)

A more accurate version of this passage would read:

On the day of Ekadasi, realise thou that thy
Lord is so near,
And discipline thy desire and hearken to the
Lord's Name,
And be Content in thy mind and be Compassionate
to all life.
Thus will thy fast fruition and be complete.
Hold thy wandering mind and fix it on a single
point.
And if thou Contemplatest the Lord's Name, thy
body and mind will become Pure.
The Lord pervades all beings:
So Sing thou the Lord's Praise, for this alone
is thy eternal Dharma. (64)

And what of the manmukh, arrogant and without compassion ? Bābā Sawan
Singh has only harsh words for him. He is considered a failure, remains
engulfed in self-centredness and does not even merit being called a man,
as is pointed out in the following passage:

Persons without compassion have human forms
but do not deserve to be called men, as they
are ruled by animal passions. Obstinacy,
selfishness, cruelty, and injustice are a
part of their nature and they are a cause of
unrest in the world. Their pastimes and
enjoyments become the cause of misery to the
living things. (65)

Compassion, the Gurmat Siddhant tells us, expresses itself through
forgiveness and therefore it is the solemn duty of the aspirant to forgive
since God is forgiveness and accordingly we in the world must live by

forgiving. It is a human duty to forgive. The message here is quite clear. It is not being said that God is first something else and then has forgiveness and is forgiving but that He is forgiveness for forgiveness is His very nature. Therefore he who remains in forgiveness remains in God. We are also told that it is our duty to love and forgive because to do so means to be truly human. Forgiveness is that which springs from the the human heart and is the expression of commitment to all who are kind and loving but also to those who are full of imperfections and are fallible. Without this commitment to forgiveness there can be no compassion. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we find the following definition of kṣamā or forgiveness:

Kshama or forgiveness means to forgive the faults of others, and to have no thought of it in the mind thereafter. Persons without forgiveness fight each other and exterminate themselves. (66)

Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of the term here appears to be that of the Adi Granth. He appears to be interpreting Rāmkalī M 1 Dhada (49) on page 937 which reads:

Without Forgiveness, myriads have been wasted away.
 Yea one can keep not their count, nor know their countless number.
 He, who Knows his Spouse, his Bonds are loosed: he is free thereafter.
 And, becoming Pure through the Word, he is Blest spontaneously with Forgiveness and Truth. (67)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt forgiveness is seen as moral in its orientation, human in its import and spiritual in its core. It is spiritual because it partakes of the experience of the unity of life on the one hand, and, of

the fallibility of all finite beings on the other. The very fallibility of a human being on account of his imperfections should be sufficient to bring the aspirant to the realization of how real forgiveness is. Who then is a forgiving person and what qualities does he display ? To this question Bābā Sawan Singh replies:

A person of forgiving nature is calm, humble, patient and forbearing. Even among great difficulties, he does not give up forgiveness and is always cheerful. There are two powers in the world. One is justice and the other is forgiveness born out of mercy. (68)

It is in the act of forgiving that true devotion is achieved. To Bābā Sawan Singh's mind forgiveness is sacred for it is an expression of the desire to love, which in turn is what God is. Without forgiveness he believes, there can be no love. Without love "the fire of desires and egoism" (69) "remain(s) (sic) unextinguished". (70)

The Principle of Non-Injury

Another precept closely related to compassion is that of non-injury. Bābā Sawan Singh takes ahimsā to mean abstinence from injury and not simply non-killing. (71) This understanding of ahimsā can be inferred from what is said in the passage quoted below which reads:

In order to tread the path of spirituality it is necessary to abstain from injuring the feelings of others and to imbibe the virtue of sympathy with others and to hearten them. Injury to the feelings of others produces darkness in the heart, while sympathizing with others and keeping them satisfied fills the heart with light. (72)

Etymologically speaking Baba Sawan Singh's concept of ahimsā is based on the idea of non-injury found in Hindu literature. In the Sāṅdilya Upaniṣad (1.1.) ahimsā means not causing suffering to any living being at any time either by mental, vocal or bodily activities. His idea of non-injury corresponds also to Vyāsa's comment in the Yoga Sūtra (2.30) concerning the absence of suppression towards all living beings in all respects for all times. (73) In the Gurmat Siddhānt ahimsā implies positive goodwill and amity with all creatures. The goodwill and amity is to be cultivated without any exception as to particular forms of life. It is also to be practised without any restrictions to any specific occasion or particular method. Ahimsā also means here the subjugation and control of feelings of hate aversion and intimidation. In Bābā Sawan Singh's view the principle of ahimsā should be extended to cover non-injury in word, thought and deed. This is illustrated by the following statement in which Bābā Sawan Singh outlines the three different forms of injury:

Mind, speech and body are the means of doing both evil and good. A man becomes the doer of evil and good through them. To think ill of others is a sin of the mind. Jealousy, hatred and enmity are evils of the mind. Harsh words, criticism of others, speaking ill of them and abusing them are sins of speech. Wrong actions are sins of the body. Not to hurt the feelings of others by thought, words and action is good principle. This can only happen when we have love for the Lord who pervades all. A seeker after spirituality never hurts the feelings of others as he believes that all are His creation. (74)

This reference to the three forms of injury is one that recurs frequently in Jain and Buddhist texts. In the Jain text Niyamasara

(4.62) mention is made of three forms of danda (control). These are vacana (control of speech and the mind), and vapus (control of the body). The Pālī Buddhist Dhammapadā (l 231-233) speaks of vocal and mental non-injury. It urges the giving up of evil conduct in speech and the adoption of good vocal conduct. Bābā Sawan Singh appears to be reinforcing what has been said in these texts.

In the Gurnat Siddhānt we also find Bābā Sawan Singh stating that himsa amounts to a form of self-injury, for not to refrain from causing injury to others is seen as betraying God. He who causes pain to others betrays God for pain and suffering is felt in the human heart which is God's abode. There can, according to him be no mistake about this:

The heart is the true mosque of God. It is the temple of the Lord. Everyone's heart is the Lord's tabernacle. He who causes pain to hearts strikes and breaks the temple. He who causes pain to others not only desecrates and ruins the temples of others, but demolishes the temple of his own heart also. (75)

Bābā Sawan Singh proceeds to argue that by not adhering to the precept of non-injury one not only causes pain to others and oneself but one also becomes an outcast in the eyes of God. All devotion is rendered worthless so long as the will to cause pain to others still prevails. The message here is that love for God's creation must first be established in the human heart before there can be any showering of divine grace:

God is never pleased with one who injures the feelings of others; even though he

may perform thousands of rituals, austerities, worships or penance or he may observe thousands of fasts and say prayers thousands of times in each fast, and may remember Him for thousands of nights - all these are not acceptable to the Lord if he injures the feelings of anyone. (76)

This statement clearly indicates the importance placed on ahimsā in the Gurmat Siddhānt. In the Hindu tradition we also find ahimsā being placed high up in the hierarchy of virtues. The Kūrma Purāṇa (2.29.31) for example, speaks of himsā as the supreme sin and destroyer of self-knowledge (ātma-jñāna nasika). Ahimsā, on the other hand, is held in high esteem in this text (2.11.15) and is called paradharma or the supreme virtue. (77)

One of the practical expressions of the principle of non-injury is the adherence to a vegetarian diet. In Rādhāsoāmī terminology this means scrupulously avoiding all animal products including eggs. This preference for a lacto-vegetarian life style is based on the conviction that spiritual growth is not possible so long as animal life is taken for the purpose of nourishment. The argument here is that the taking of animal life increases one's karmic burden and contradicts the principle of reverence for all life. (78)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt Bābā Sawan Singh does not develop any views about vegetarianism. However, the very fact that the intake of pure, satvik foods as opposed to rajasik (energizing) or tamasik (stupefying) foods is stipulated suggests the advocacy of a vegetarian diet. (79) The classification of foods adopted by Bābā

Sawan Singh in the Gurnat Siddhānt is that of the Sāṃkhya guṇa scheme as found in the Yoga Sūtra. (80)

It is generally recognized that the sanctity attached to all forms of life and the duty of abstaining from any form of injury or hurt to living beings is one of the essential tenets of Hinduism (and not of Buddhism as claimed by some scholars). (81) In the Manusmṛiti there is already condemnation of meat eating. Manu calls meat eaters the worst type of sinner. (82) He argues that the procuring of meat not only involves killing but the creating of bad karma. (83)

Among the Sants some of the most vocal advocates of vegetarianism include Gurū Ravidās (84) and Dādū. (85) Gurū Nānak, it is argued by some, not only rejected the eating of meat but attached great importance to the question of vegetarianism. (86) Many Sikhs will not eat any form of meat, rejecting fish as well as eggs. Others refrain only from meat. Nevertheless for the Sikh of today, vegetarianism is a matter of personal conscience. For the followers of the Rādhāsoāmī faith it is one of the preconditions for initiation and is essential to the Rādhāsoāmī way of life.

The Principle of Humility

The central issue surrounding what is said in the Gurnat Siddhānt about humility (87) pertains to the problem of pride. Bābā Sawan Singh elaborates at length on the folly of pride. Pride, he argues

results from wordly attachment. Pride is deceiving, and to be attached to something that deceives means to be attached to māyā. This is what is said about pride in the Gurmat Siddhānt:

The world is worshipping woman and wealth. Their power is increasing. The rich and the poor are equally affected. Their influence affects all walks of life. It is extremely difficult to give them up but still we come across persons who have done so. It is, however, far more difficult to give up pride and vainglory, partisanship and envy. Those, who do so, are very few. To give up Maya is difficult but it is to no purpose if inner pride is not surrendered. Pride has brought about the fall of many great ascetics and destroyed them. If one gives up pride and sets fire to the considerations of vainglory, he then unites with the Name. (88)

The distaste for wordly attachment and pride displayed here reminds us not only of Gurū Arjan (89) but also of the Buddhist doctrine of anicca or impermanence. Bābā Sawan Singh reminds us that the world is but a fleeting fancy, and life on earth a temporary sojourn. In the Gurmat Siddhānt it is stated that:

Man is like a guest for the night who has to leave in the morning. Being here for a night it is useless to build schemes for ages. Houses, temples and wealth change like the shade of a tree. The world is like a sarai (resting place) visited by persons who constantly give place to others. Body, son, wife, family etc. which he considers eternal, ate with him for a few days only and would then have to be given up. None of these would accompany him. It is therefore useless and in vain to be proud of them. These are like a dream. (90)

We are repeatedly reminded of the pitfalls of egoism and pride. We are warned that without humility we cannot win God's favour. We are

nothing for all beings belong to God. (91) This view is summed up as follows:

In order to be deserving of Lord's grace we have to empty the heart of vainglory for, unless the vessel is empty, it can contain nothing. Because of humility Kal and Maya cannot affect us. (92)

When we give up pride and bow at His door, our souls become pure and we are saved from being burnt by the fire of passions. When we become servants of His servants, we find a place at His door. (93)

The path of finding the Lord consists in being humble and meek because we cannot deserve His grace and carry out the wishes of the Undescribable unless we give up pride and vainglory and meet some God-intoxicated saint and become his servant. (94)

The overriding message of these passages is that no man can hope to reach God if his own heart is full of pride and egoism. The aspirant must be truly humble and acutely aware of his shortcomings. This lies in the knowledge that God alone is the source of all actions. He alone is the giver of all gifts. It is only by His grace that we are able to enjoy the fruits of this life and the world.

What then is the divine response to humility on the part of the true devotee? The answer in the Gurmat Siddhant is simple and clear. It is the gift of God's divine grace and boundless love. This is what Bābā Sawan Singh has to say:

The Lord is always present with those who pray in humility and with meekness. They play in the ocean of the Lord like fishes in water. The Lord is immanent in land and

sea. If there is humility in heart, the Lord meets us openly. (95)

The grace of the Lord and Master cannot be had forcibly. He only melts on hearing humble prayer. If you are meek and pray to him in humility, he may turn his face towards you and you may obtain His Grace. (96)

Here what is being said is that as long as one identifies with the ego-self no spirituality can be cultivated within. It is only after one surrenders oneself to God and the Satgurū is there hope of receiving the gift of divine grace. True humility coupled with love is the ultimate antidote to selfishness and pride. In order to be in the presence of God one has to consider oneself inconsequential and become God's loving servant. (97)

The Principle of Cleanliness

The aspiring gurmukh has not only to be truthful, compassionate and humble but also faces the task of cleansing himself of impurities. Bābā Sawan Singh commences by explaining that souch (98) means purity or cleanliness. Cleanliness is both internal and external. Although he stresses that both forms are essential, (99) he does not emphasize the external forms of purification. (100) He states that outer self-purification is no substitute for inner self-purification, which is what really matters:

Purification cannot be achieved by external bathing alone. It can only be had by bathing in the internal pool of nectar (Amritsar, Mansarovar or Tribeni). This can be possible

only by searching within one's own body. By reaching the pool of nectar the three covers of the soul (gross, subtle and ethereal) and the bondage of the gunas (qualities), mind, maya and the five elements are removed and the soul becomes pure. (101)

What is being said here is that only meditation on the divine Name can cleanse the soul of all impurities, thus making it the receptacle of God's love. This in turn is achieved only after the physical plane has been transcended and entry to the astral plane has been achieved. In an attempt to drive home this point he writes that:

Gurus describe the clean body as one in which the true Name of the Lord is dwelling. True cleanliness is achieved by inner practice of Shabd. That heart is pure in which there is devotion for the deathless Lord and Master. (102)

The Gurmat Siddhānt advocates tempering self-purification with devotion. Purity without devotion is said to be nothing but an empty virtue without import for spiritual progress. Only when purity and meditation complement each other does one become free from worldly attachments. It is also proposed here that the source of all purity is God and therefore living a pure life implies that cleanliness is godliness.

Coupled with the idea of cleanliness or purity is that of simplicity. A seeker after God leads a simple lifestyle and is simple in word, thought and deed. The man of simplicity spends a minimum amount of time eating and drinking. (103) He eats to live and not live to eat. (104) He avoids eating excessively for this interferes with meditation (105) For Bābā Sawan Singh simplicity manifests itself also in

humility. The true devotee cannot but be humble in his response to the divine presence which is everywhere.

The Principle of Contentment

In the Gurmat Siddhant santosh (106) is defined as "satisfaction, agreement, being contented with what one has and being satisfied with it". (107) Bābā Sawan Singh could be seen here as reflecting upon the attitude of complete trust. By trust he means complete trust in the goodness of God and His concern for our welfare. This does not mean that one should remain entirely unconcerned about what happens or that one should remain necessarily satisfied with things as they are. It is imperative that one should always fight adversity and constantly strive to make life better than it is, not only for oneself but also for one's fellow men. This view is presented in the following manner in the Gurmat Siddhant:

It would, however, be a mistake to infer from all this that contentment means idleness or slackness. To seem contented and to grieve in secret and to feel jealous is to show oneself in different colors and to deceive the public. A contented person on getting nothing even after making efforts does not blame the Master or the Lord. He tries seriously to accomplish the task. (108)

Contentment should be taken here to mean the acceptance of those conditions which are beyond our powers to change. It also implies that while man is entitled to the good things in life, he should realise

repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of uprooting attachment to pleasure and antipathy to pain and controlling desires, all of which has its roots in the Upanisads. (111) The fact that Bābā Sawan Singh uses the past tense "was" in the passage above seems to indicate that he might have had a previous source in mind, which very well may have been the Bhagavad Gītā or the Upanisads.

Bābā Sawan Singh sees fortitude as a kind of moral stamina. Fortitude usually carries with it associations of courage, wisdom and patience. A man of fortitude combats all odds with patience and commits himself to the belief that the truth will eventually triumph. Believing this he does not allow himself to be caught off balance nor does he fall prey to worldly and sensuous temptations. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the link between fortitude and continence is established in that the latter is seen as an expression of the former. As a spiritually important activity continence is viewed as a discipline which enables the aspirant slowly and steadily to conquer his sense desires. It is a discipline which regulates personal behaviour patterns.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the discussion about continence centres primarily on the practice of sexual continence. In Rādhāsoāmī parlance sexual continence applies to thought and action. This means that sexual continence involves not merely the sexual organ but all organs of the body. This is expressed in the Gurmat Siddhānt in no uncertain terms:

Continence does not mean that one should merely control his lust and sensual passions. It means to withdraw oneself from all sense

desires. If we listen to sensual talk with our ears and see things with our eyes that stimulate passions and yet avoid the sexual urge, it would be like putting one's hand in fire and hoping that it will not be burnt. One should therefore withdraw one's attention and thought from all things which stimulate passion in order to achieve success in one's celibacy. The aim of continence is to try search God because it is a powerful medium for the goal of His realisation. (112)

In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition sexual continence does not mean celibacy but chastity which is to be practised by the householder. The rationale behind the non-advocation of celibacy is that celibacy would prevent the procreational function of sex. (113) It is also believed that the family is the unit in which the individual should develop his character by adhering to moral injunctions in his daily married life. (114)

The belief that spirituality is not incompatible with married life should be seen against the broader background of Sikhism. (115) A fundamental tenet of the Sikh faith is that progression towards spiritual enlightenment can only take place when the individual is living a normal social life. The most appropriate form of life is felt to be one which combines the pressures of earning a living (116) with the social responsibilities of the family and society. It is a recurring theme in the Ādi Granth that any approach to spirituality which encourages a withdrawal from the world is to be avoided. On the contrary, an involvement in everyday life conforming to certain ethical standards is seen as the basis of leading a God-centred life. (117)

We also find Bābā Sawan Singh justifying chastity by furnishing the well-known yogic argument that semen is a precious commodity to be used sparingly and not wasted unnecessarily. The argument here is that the "vital fluid" is, in essence the source of life and convertible into spiritual energy. Relying heavily on Gurū Nānak's Prān Sangli (118) he makes the following claim:

A man of good character, values his vital fluid more than his life. He always carefully preserves it, because it is the cause of physical, mental and soul's development. (119)

The importance of chastity is extolled in the Gurnat Siddhānt. It is called "the most beautiful flower of all human virtues". The following passage speaks for itself. Referring to the virtues of leading a chaste life Bābā Sawan Singh proclaims:

It makes an angel of a man. Its beauty lies in its own purity. It has the quality of keeping the soul and the body free from any blemish and defect. It needs very great restraint because chastity may be destroyed by even thinking an evil thought. Fruits remain fresh on the trees, but once they are plucked their freshness is destroyed. One may preserve them for some time by placing them in a jar of honey. Similarly, chastity of a man or woman, once broken can be protected only by devotion of a very high order. (120)

The Principle of Service

The term sevā literally means service but in Gurū Nānak's usage it has a much wider devotional connotation. When we speak of selfless service in a Sikh way we take the term to mean both social service and devotion to God. (121) Bābā Sawan Singh sees social service (122) much in the same terms as it is seen in Sikhism. He believes, like his Sikh brothers that love has little value until it is practised. The true devotee cannot rightly remain inactive but must engage himself in the affairs of his community and society at large. He must take every opportunity to serve his fellow men and to do this he must be free of attachment, greed and pride. Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of social service, if it is to be correctly understood, must be seen together with the principles of social equality and universal brotherhood, two fundamental principles in Sikhism.

The concept of social equality can be examined in the light of the following points. First the rejection of the caste system. Bābā Sawan Singh agrees with Sikh teachings that complete equality among all men is the fundamental moral principle required to regulate social relations. The idea of caste is rejected in Sikhism because it gives rise to false feelings of superiority and pride. It is also rejected on the grounds that there is no fundamental difference between men; all are God's creation. It is also argued in Sikhism that the laws of nature do not discriminate on the basis of caste. The attainment of human ideals is said to be possible for all irrespective of caste

distinctions. Finally it is declared that caste status has no bearing on one's karma.

Bābā Sawan Singh would also agree with the Sikh principle of universal brotherhood. According to this principle states that everyone emanates from the same divine source and they will return to this divine source. The whole of humanity is bound by a fraternal relationship. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is one of the main themes in Sikhism. The following lines attributed to Gurū Gobind Singh could have very well been uttered by Bābā Sawan Singh himself:

God is in the Hindu temple as well as
in the mosque. God is addressed in
both the Hindu and the Muslim prayer.
The Quran and the Purana praise the
same God. They are all of one form
and one God has made them all. (123)

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the Sikh concept of dan or charity is brought to our attention as part of the sevā discussion. (124) The principle of charity is explained by Bābā Sawan Singh as follows:

To share one's hard-earned income with
the helpless and the sick and to spend
it on the poor, the downtrodden and
orphans is called charity. (125)

The emphasis here is on the sharing of one's honestly earned income with the less fortunate. (126) The idea that one has to earn what one shares is in keeping with the teachings of Gurū Nānak. So much emphasis has been put on the principle of kirt karnā (earning one's living honestly) that it has become an integral part of Sikh ethics and has been absorbed into the teachings of the Gurmat Siddhānt. The

philosophy behind this precept of sharing what one earns is that charity contributes to the development of compassion and an awareness of social responsibility.

When speaking about sharing and charity Bābā Sawan Singh mentions the Sikh system of tithe collection known as the daswand system. (127) Under this system every Sikh is required to put aside one tenth of his income for charity. The practice seems to have taken root during the time of Gurū Gobind Singh. Masands or daswand collectors were appointed to collect the tithes. The daswand system was later disbanded because of misappropriation of funds by some masands. In certain Rādhāsoāmī circles a loose system of donation collections still exists. The faithful are usually expected to give what they can afford, though the sum of one tenth of one's income is also sometimes referred to.

In the Gurmat Siddhānt the idea of sharing and charity is linked to the argument that in actual fact it is not the individual who gives but God, who is the ultimate dispenser of the highest gift of all, divine grace. This is how Bābā Sawan Singh puts it:

The Lord is bountiful. He is the giver of all blessings. Whatever He is giving, is for all. Whatever we have others also have a right to it. We should share and enjoy. We all belong to the Lord. (128)

What is being suggested here is that God is the giver of all blessings and that all humans belong to God. Therefore giving to others is no different from giving what we have already received from God i.e., His

love and blessings. In performing acts of charity, which are acts of selfless love, the individual is actually sharing God's love with all. It can be said therefore that for Bābā Sawan Singh sharing means extending God's caring love to all human beings.

Summary

We have explained Bābā Sawan Singh's thinking about the principles of moral action. We began by explaining how he saw the commitment to right action as linked to the idea of God. Before analyzing the concept of manmukh, we discussed his idea of the ethics of self-transformation. We defined the concept of the unregenerate individual from the standpoint of mind, self-centredness and illusion and in this discussion we attempted to highlight how these attitudes distracted the manmukh from a life of God-centredness. We then discussed the central theme of Bābā Sawan Singh's concept of manmukh namely the desire on the part of the devotee for God-centredness.

We explained that the Sikh value system provided the ideational backdrop for Bābā Sawan Singh's Singh's code of ethics. In discussing the concept of dharma we saw how it was perceived as having the dual function of a cosmic principle and a code of ethical conduct. We elaborated on Bābā Sawan Singh's catalogue of personal and social virtues explaining how truthfulness was presented as an equivalent of truthful living. In analyzing the principle of compassion we discovered that in the Gurmat Siddhant it was linked to the notion of

forgiveness and loving kindness. After summarizing the principal constituents of the precept of non-injury, we explained how it was linked with injunctions regarding vegetarianism and what this meant to Bābā Sawan Singh. We examined the concept of humility, focussing on how it was seen as contributing to a withdrawal from wordly attachment and self-deception. We examined the principle of cleanliness, concentrating on the belief that inner self-purification meant the development of Nām consciousness. We viewed Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of contentment as peaceful disposition and analyzed his idea of sexual continence. We saw how sexual continence was equated with chastity and explained why this was preferred to celibacy. Finally we explained that Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of social service was basically that of Sikhism and then discussed the importance attached to the idea of charity.

NOTES

1. Bābā Sawan Singh is not alone in relating moral action to the idea of God. In the Vedas a similar correlation is recognized. For a discussion of this relationship in the Vedas see M. Satchidananda, "Ethics And Values: A Hindu View", in The Adyar Library Bulletin (Golden Jubilee Volume), (1986), p. 320.
2. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 176-178.
3. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 182.
4. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 178.
5. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 189. Bābā Sawan Singh repeatedly uses the phrase "the five evils". What he has in mind are the Sikh concepts of kām, lobh, moh, krodh and ahaṅkar. For an analysis of these human tendencies see A. Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs (Patiala, 1970), pp. 55-74.
6. The Sanskrit term manmukh has its roots in mānā and refers to the self-willed autocentric personality.
7. The term gurmukh is derived from gurū mukha which literally means "one who faces the gurū". It denotes the God-centred allocentric personality.
8. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p..
9. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 274.
10. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 267.
11. Bābā Sawan Singh prefers to stick to the English term. He does not use the Sanskrit, Hindi or Punjābī equivalent in the Gurmat Siddhānt.
12. This point is argued by W.H. McLeod, The Life and Doctrine of Guru Nānak (Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1965), pp. 89-90.
13. See chapter V note 18 of this study.
14. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 206.
15. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 206.
16. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 249-254.
17. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 249.
18. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 254.

19. Though he does not say it Bābā Sawan Singh has here the Punjābī concept of haumai in mind. For an explanation of the term haumai, which McLeod translates as self-interest, see The Life and Doctrine of Guru Nānak, p. 94.

20. McLeod calls ego and pride "loose popular connotations" of the term haumai. See The Life and Doctrine of Guru Nānak, p. 94.

21. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 164.

22. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 202-208.

23. The concept of māyā has been discussed in Chapter III of this study.

24. In Rādhāsoāmī parlance the material world refers to the physical plane called piṇḍ. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 278.

25. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 274.

26. Gurū Nānak's idea of dharmśāl appears in the Japjī. The passage in question reads:

Nights Days, Seasons,
Air, Water, Fire, the Nether Regions:
In their midst is the Earth set,
As Dharma's, the Law's set,
Habitated by different peoples, beings, species,
Of various kinds, forms, qualities:
Are judged on what their Actions be,
By Him, the True One, Whose Court is True,
There sparkle the ones Approved, appointed,
And they, by His Grace, are Anointed.
There, O there, 'tis known who's true who's false:
'Tis he who's there that knows.

(Japjī 34 Ādi Granth p. 7)

27. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 134.

28. For notes on the Bhaktarātnāvalī see A. Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, p. 190.

29. For an explanation of these stages in the Ādi Granth see A. Sethi, "Aspects of Nam Simran", in O'Connell Israel and others, Sikh Religion and History in the Twentieth Century, p. 46.

30. See for example Taittirīya Aranyaka (10.62-1), Bhagavad Gītā (16.1.27), Bhagavad Purāna (11. 17. 21), Kūrma Purāna (2.27.8), Kautilya Arthasastra (1.3), Yaiṇavalkya Smṛti (3.136) and Jabāladarsāna Upaniṣad (1.6).

31. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 205.

32. The Rahitnāmā is based on a dialogue between Gurū Gobind Singh, Bhāī Nand Lāl and Bhāī Desa Singh. It is usually spoken of in conjunction with the Tanakhahnamā of Bhāī Nand Lāl. For information on the Rahitnāmā see McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, pp. 74-79.
33. The Sikh Maryādā or Sikh code of conduct is a systematization of the Rahitnāmās of Bhāī Dayā Singh, Bhāī Nand Lāl and Chaupa Singh, prominent figures in the period after the formation of the Khālsā in the eighteenth century. A popular English translation of the Sikh Maryādā is K. Kaur and I. Singh, Rehat Maryādā: a guide to the Sikh way of life (place and date not given). For another translation of the code published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Committee see W.O. Cole and P.S. Sambhi, The Sikhs. Their Beliefs and Religious Practices (New Delhi, 1978), 79-86.
34. The ianam sākhis represent hagiographical accounts of the life of Guru Nanak. Brief information on the ianam sākhis is provided by McLeod, Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, pp. 8-9.
35. For notes on these secondary texts see A. Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, pp. 8-17.
36. W.H. McLeod, "Ethical Standards in World Religions - The Sikhs", in The Sikh Courier 7 (1975), p. 7.
37. A schematic diagram of the Sikh value system appears in S. Singh, Philosophical Foundations of the Sikh Value System (New Delhi, 1982), p. 75.
38. Miller informs us that the term dharma is a highly complex one with forty two primary definitions and hundreds of secondary and cognate uses. See D. Miller, "Sources of Hindu Ethical Studies", in Journal of Religious Ethics, Fall (1981), p. 189. There are a number of etymological and historical studies of the use of the term. These include M. Dhavamony, "Hindu Morality", in Studia Missionaria 27 (1978), see pp. 219-255 and B.S. Gauchwal, "The Metaphysical Foundations of Hindu Ethics and Religion", in Philosophy East and West 16 (1966), pp. 143-159. For a more general treatment of dharma see Kuppaswamy, Dharma and Society. A Study in Social Values see chapter 12, pp. 16-30.
39. This view is held by S. Das, "The Concept of Dharma. A Methodological Tool in Contemporary Hindu Ethics", in Religion and Society XXVI (1979), p. 59.
40. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. III p. 179.
41. A.B. Creel, Dharma in Hindu Ethics (Columbia, 1977), p. 3.
42. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. III p. 180.
43. Gurnat Siddhant Vol. III p. 280.

44. Babā Sawan Singh defines dharma^{ātma} as "dutiful person" and "high souled one" respectively. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol III pp. 187 and 188.
45. This phrase is from I.K. Watson, "From Karma to Moksha", in Journal of Dharma 2 (1977), p. 12.
46. B.S. Gauchwal, "The Sphere and Significance of Ethics, Morality and Religion in Hindu Tradition", in Philosophy East and West 13 (1964), p. 339.
47. This definition stems from S.S. Kumar, "Indian Philosophy and Social Ethics", in Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy 6 (1967), p. 63.
48. These are the state of brahmachārya (brahmanic studentship), grahastha (householder), vānaprashta (anchorite) and sannyasin (renouncer). For details see Dhavamony, "Hindu Morality", pp. 238-245.
49. For a listing of duties according to the Varnāśramadharma see S. K. Maitri, The Ethics of the Hindus (Calcutta, 1925), pp. 11-15.
50. For a list of such duties see Dhavamony, "Hindu Morality", p. 243.
51. For a detailed study of the puruṣārtha doctrine see C. Crawford, The Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals (Calcutta, 1974).
52. Babā Sawan Singh prefers this Hindi form to the Sanskrit satyavacana. The term satya vachan is a combination of two words, namely satya and vachan meaning veracity and speech respectively. The term is used in the Gurmat Siddhant to convey the idea of truthfulness in thought and speech.
53. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 202.
54. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 203.
55. In the Rāmāyana (2.109.13) we find a similar line of reasoning. The passage in question reads:
- Truth alone is God in the world;
dharma ever brings in truth. All
have their root in truth, there is
no goal higher than truth.
- (Quoted from Dhavamony, "Hindu Morality",
pp. 224-225).
56. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 204.
57. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 208.

58. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 188. See also p. 183 of the same volume.
59. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 188.
60. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 189.
61. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III pp. 188-189.
62. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 192.
63. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 192.
64. Gauri M 5 (Pauri 11), Adi Granth p. 299.
65. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 190.
66. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 198. See also p. 202 of the same volume.
67. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 198.
68. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 199.
69. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 201.
70. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 202.
71. It is often wrongly assumed that the etymological meaning of ahimsā is "non-killing". Tähtinen's well documented research of Vedic sources bears out the fact that the meaning of the verb is not limited to killing. It primarily refers to physical injury which in extreme cases results in death. See U. Tähtinen, Ahimsa. Non Violence in Indian Tradition (London, 1976), pp. 1-5. It is to be noted that Baba Sawan Singh sticks to the English term in the Gurmat Siddhant.
72. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III pp. 183-184.
73. For brief notes on the concept of ahimsā in the Sāṅdilya Upaniṣad and the Yoga Sūtras see Tähtinen, Ahimsa. Non Violence in Indian Tradition pp. 7-8.
74. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III pp. 185-186.
75. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xv.
76. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xv.
77. See Tähtinen, Ahimsa. Non Violence in Indian Tradition p. 76.
78. Darshan Singh, one of Babā Sawan Singh's spiritual successors has published two pamphlets on the spiritual significance of a vegetarian diet. They bears the titles The Spiritual Aspects of a Vegetarian Diet and The Vegetarian Way of Life. The views presented here are no

different from the ones voiced by Bābā Sawan Singh in his publications.

79. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 228. The list of satvic foods recommended here consist mainly of fruits, vegetables and cereals.

80. For a detailed exposition of the guna theory in the Yoga Sūtras see Mishra, Textbook of Yoga Psychology, pp. 17-22.

81. S. Aiyer, Evolution of Hindu Moral Ideals (Calcutta, 1935), p. 118 points out that what was novel in Buddhist teaching was not the doctrine of ahimsā but the condemnation of blood sacrifices. He even goes as far as to suggest that the Buddha may have even eaten meat. This theory is contested by the Zen adept Rōshi Kapleau who questions Aiyer's interpretation of the Buddhist Sūtras. See P. Kapleau, A Buddhist Case for Vegetarianism (London, 1982), pp. 223-225.

82. In the Manusmṛiti (5.51) Manu calls all those who purchase, sell, kill or dismember animals, killers.

83. See Manusmṛiti (45.55). However, it is Mahāyāna literature that explicit references to ahimsā in relation to karma are made. The Lankavatāra Sūtra for example, argues that flesh consumption does have a bearing on one's karmic load. See Tähtinen, Ahimsa. Non-Violence in Indian Tradition, p. 111.

84. In one of his verses Ravidās proclaims:

Let thou not kill any living creature
O Ravidās.
The same Lord dwelleth in all.
The same self pervadeth all beings.
No other is there at all.

(Translated as Darshan 188 by
K. N. Upadhyaya, Guru Ravidās.
Life and Teaching (Beas, 1982), p. 192).

For a selection of other verses see pp 194-195).

85. Dādū was a vigorous campaigner for vegetarianism. He condemned the taking of life in no uncertain terms as is evident from this passage:

If anyone takes the life of any other creature,
That person goes to hell. I tell you the truth,
there is no doubt about it, sayeth Dadu.

(Translated as B 1 Sach 4 by Upadhyaya, Dadu The
Compassionate Mystic, p. 200).

86. Scholarly opinion remains divided on the question of what Gurū Nānak had to say about vegetarianism or whether in fact he himself was a vegetarian. However, it is firmly believed at Beas that he was a

vegetarian. We have been unable to locate in Rādhāsoāmī literature instances where either historical, hagiographical or scriptural evidence is cited to back up this claim.

87. Bābā Sawan Singh uses the English term. In the Gurmat Siddhānt no Sanskrit, Hindī or Puñjābī translation is provided.

88. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p 174.

89. In Rāg Gaurī M 5 (1), p. 197 of the Ādi Granth, Gurū Arjan is recorded to have uttered the following words:

Gather thou all the riches, but thy mind is
sated not.
See thou all the beauty, but thou art not
satiated.
One is involved his sons and wife knowing they
are his,
But they are all reduced to dust one day.

90. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 156-257.

91. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 159.

92. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 155.

93. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 160.

94. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 165.

95. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 172.

96. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 168.

97. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 167.

98. The term souch is probably a misrepresentation of the term Sankrit term sauca.

99. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 219-220.

100. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 21-22. He refers here to a number of self-purificatory yogic exercises, pointing out their limited spiritual significance.

101. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 24-25.

102. The reference here could probably be to the fourth stanza of the Japjī which speaks of washing away sins with the dye of Nām. See also Sri Rāg M 1 (3-5) p. 19 of the Ādi Granth for a passage to the same effect.

103. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 229.

104. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol III p. 227.
105. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 229.
106. Santosh (santosa) is derived from the Sanskrit root *tus* meaning happiness and calm. It is an important term in Sikh ethical thought and often appears in conjunction with the precept of truth.
107. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 192.
108. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 193.
109. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the term continence appears to be used in the sense of *indriya nigraha* (restraint of the sense-organs) rather than *brahmacharya* (celibacy). Bābā Sawan Singh, however, sticks to the English word throughout the discussion. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 237-241.
110. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 212.
111. Dasgupta cites Katha Upaniṣad (VI.11) and Mundaka Upaniṣad (III. 2.2) as examples of Upanisadic teachings that resurface in the Bhagavad Gītā (11.70) on matters of continence and fortitude. See S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy Vol II (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 495-496.
112. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 239-240.
113. For details of correct marital sexual behaviour, in the Gurmat Siddhānt see Vol. III p. 238.
114. Bābā Sawan Singh spells out the correct behaviour of the householder in Vol. III pp. 237-240 of the Gurmat Siddhānt.
115. At Beas it is often pointed out that almost all of the Sikh Gurūs were householders.
116. For notes on the Sikh principle of *kirt karnā* (the principle of earning one's living by honest means) and the Sikh injunction against begging see P. Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread (Amritsar, 1971), p. 9. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 220-223 for Bābā Sawan Singh's comments on the principle of *kirt karna*.
117. See for example, Shalok M 4 (5) p 140. In the Gurmat Siddhānt there is talk of the householder Sant who "remained truly detached through the grace of Nam". (Vol II p xxiii).
118. The passages which Bābā Sawan Singh quotes are too long to be reproduced here. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III pp. 245-248.
119. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 234.
120. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. III p. 241.

121. See W.H. McLeod, "A Sikh Theology for Modern Times", in O'Connell, Israel and others, Sikh Religion and History in the Twentieth Century, p. 43.

122. Bābā Sawan Singh also uses the term physical service to denote social service. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. I p 2.

123. Dhanasri M 4 (2) Adi Granth p. 668.

124. In Sikh terminology the term dan means giving alms as an act of charity and social service. See P. Singh, The Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p. 22.

125. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III p. 213.

126. See Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III pp. 213-219.

127. Mention of the daswand system appears on page 214 of Vol. III of the Gurmat Siddhant.

128. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. III pp. 212-213.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "UNITY OF RELIGIONS" THESIS IN THE GURMAT SIDDHĀNT

Introduction

Essentialism (1) is an attitude towards religious pluralism native to the Neo-Hindu (2) mentality. It also has been seriously debated by prominent scholars in the West. (3) Among the most prominent representatives of the Neo-Hindu position are Radhakrishnan, Swāmī Vivekananda and Śrī Aurobindo. Well-known names in Western scholarly circles include Fritjhof Schuon, Huston Smith and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Radhakrishnan views religious tradition as a relative expression of a primordial form which is subject to mystical experience and intuitive apprehension. It is considered to be a finite form of the essence of religion which is transcendental. (4)

Swāmī Vivekananda believes that in all religions the ultimate goal is the unity of all religions since the ultimate end of all religions is the one basic truth, i.e. the divinity of man. (5)

Śrī Aurobindo contends that the inner essence of all religions apart from its outward mechanisms of creed, cult and ceremony and symbol is the search for God. (6)

Schön's hypothesis is that the great religions are all, at their experiential roots, in contact with the same ultimate divine reality. He goes on to add that their different experiences of that reality, interacting over the centuries with the different thought forms of different cultures, have led to increasing differentiation and contrasting elaborations. (7)

Smith in postulating a primordialist tradition sees historical religions as a kind of fragmented prism, the unity behind which is only perceivable if spatio-temporality is transcended. (8)

Nasr argues that the principal expression of all religions is "that principal Reality which is Sacred and the source of all the is sacred". (9) He believes that it is not possible to logically or epistemologically understand the unity of religions since and logic and epistemology are tools of what he terms "desacralized knowledge". (10)

Essentialists try to overcome the diversity of religions by viewing them as driving forces in the life of man that share a common esoteric core. The proponents of this school argue that there is an absolute reality the route of access to which is a combination of faith and insight which probe beyond the profusion of religions' exoteric forms. Here all religious symbols are perceived as inklings of the divine essence and each is considered truthful in the measure it reflects the Ultimate.

Bābā Sawan Singh views all religions as one in that they all propagate the ultimate truth of the existence of God and confirm man's ultimate spiritual quest to be God realization. He sees the affirmation of this truth as a conscious realization of transcendental reality which is universal. In the Gurmat Siddhānt universal consciousness is encompassing a whole spiritual universe about higher and lower existential planes with hierarchies of being which inhabit them headed by God, to which correspond the mystical states experienced by the mystic on his path to divine communion. (11)

This chapter presents a studied commentary of Bābā Sawan Singh's primordialist position. It examines the following key propositions presented in the Gurmat Siddhānt: (i) that all religions possess an exoteric and an esoteric dimension, (ii) that all religions are one in that they possess a mystical core, (iii) that this mystical core is man's mystical quest for communion with God and finally (iv) that this mystical experience is ineffable, self-proving and transcendental.

The "Two Religions" Proposition

In what appears to be an attempt to differentiate the accidental from the essential, Bābā Sawan Singh proposes that religion has two dimensions. He uses the terms social religion and spiritual religion to describe these dimensions. Commenting on the functions of social religion he explains that:

The purpose of social religion is to support some class in society. Reforms of social relations, preservation of ancient customs, celebration of festivals and engaging in singing and praying is the way of social religion. (12)

What emerges here is not so much an explanation of the functions of institutionalized religion but more an expression of the use of religion by some parties to further their own interests. Bābā Sawan Singh appears here to be echoing the well-known Sant disapproval of Brahminical dominance of Hindu religious ceremony. Essentially, however, the message is that orthodox religion is primarily concerned with ceremonialism rather than the inner search for God. This statement points to another proposition namely that religion in its exoteric form is man-made. Bābā Sawan Singh sees man as the starting point of religion. He sees religion as having a human ground originating in man's response to God. This is illustrated in the following passage:

Man existed first and all religions and religious books came after him. Various religions have come and gone, but man has existed since before any of them were established. Religion is for man not man for religion. All scriptures are the outcome of the thinking of man; but the real secret is inside of man. (13)

Bābā Sawan Singh is not making any profound statement about the history of religion or man's relationship to it. What one could read into this statement is the view that religious belief does not necessarily express the true inner spirit of religion which, in Bābā Sawan Singh's eyes is essentially spiritual. What is more important here is not diversity but the oneness of purpose in religion. In the

Gurmat Siddhānt this means that unitary experience of God within. The feeling expressed here is that there is a distinction to be made between what is popularly conceived of as religious practice and what actually is true religion in the spiritual sense of the term. For Bābā Sawan Singh religion must be that solemn expression of the very existence of God. This formula is a simple one yet it possesses important spiritual connotations. It tells us in no uncertain terms that religion is inner devotion rather superficial outward worship.

In another passage we see Bābā Sawan Singh explaining that the appearance of different beliefs arose because of man-made divisions within the different religions. These divisions moved man away from the realization that there is only one ultimate truth, i.e. the existence of God and His abiding presence in man. He writes:

The Lord created only human beings but they later became Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and so forth. There were no Sikhs five hundred years ago, no Muslims thirteen hundred years ago and no Christians two thousand years ago. Three thousand years ago no Buddhists were to be found. Many races existed before the Aryans founded Hinduism. Men are men- whether of East or of the West- and all are one. No one belongs to a higher caste, as there is Atma (soul) in each of them, and that is a particle of the Lord. (14)

The philosophy here is that man-made religions divide whilst humanity unites. It is clear that Bābā Sawan Singh regrets the fact that organized religion by virtue of its emphasis on outer differences divides, when in actual fact all mankind is united in that all are God's creation. He sees religion as that posture by which man creates

the presence of God from within rather than presenting images of the Divine from without. This in his view has led to society placing more emphasis on religious identity rather than the very being of God's existence. This he fears has caused the inner significance of religion to become eclipsed by its outer form, causing religion to be relieved of its metaphysical content. He also appears to be suggesting that inner religion exists independent of organized religion. Bābā Sawan Singh is uncompromising when expressing his displeasure with religious parochialism which he perceives as having nothing to do with spiritually meaningful religious endeavour. This is evident when he says that:

All enlightened and pure souls, regardless of religion, teach that the differences between the various faiths are due to religious vanity and spiritual egotism, which are brought about by narrow - mindedness, scepticism and false notions of their followers. These differences are the result of misapprehensions which conceal the scorpion of selfishness, vanity, intolerance, that stings a man, gives him intense pain and makes him uneasy and restless. (15)

In the Gurnat Siddhant there is a certain weariness of what could be termed the denial of the metaphysical essence of religion. Bābā Sawan Singh's anti-ritualist sentiments are reflected in his aversion for the non-essentials of orthodox religion. He views religious practices of a ritualistic, formalistic nature with a certain distaste. He sees social religion degrading the true meaning of religion by reducing religion to nothing more than a meaningless ritual. Bābā Sawan Singh does not mince his words. His message is a straight forward one. All

forms of ritual worship are a denial of the philosophy and spirit of inner worship. God is to be worshipped from within and not from without. Organized religion he sees as being primarily concerned with what is "out there" and not with what "is in here". The message is simply that the kingdom of God lies within. Man has ignored this message because he has misunderstood the esoteric message of the sacred texts. In the Gurmat Siddhānt we read that :

Saints tell us that the Kingdom of God is within us, and we find words to this effect in all scriptures. But owing to the lack of realized souls, Dharma (Religion) has become entangled in outer rituals. They fail to teach man how to go inside and find the Kingdom within Himself. (16)

Bābā Sawan Singh is concerned about that approach to religion that fails to recognize that outer forms open up beyond themselves. He warns us of the danger of the significance of inner devotion being eclipsed by the superficial practices of religious communities. (17) His comments on the futility of religious dogma and rigid conventions are no different from those voiced by many of the leading figures of the medieval Sant movement. (18)

He notes that for ordinary believers at any given time, the exoteric is what religion is all about. Religion for such a person concerns doctrines, symbols, aesthetic forms, organizational structures, myths and rituals - i.e. that which gives religion its particular historical identity. In the Gurmat Siddhānt Bābā Sawan Singh explains that:

To the common man the rituals are more important than the Lord, and one who believes in some by-gone Mahatma or has

faith in his religious books is considered to be a religious man. This narrow-mindedness is like a parasite which feeds on religion and sucks its blood to such an extent that the real Spirit leaves it and only the skeleton remains. Within the fort of sectarianism the frenzy of religion takes a complete hold like a rabid elephant. This sectarianism becomes the keeper and the usurper of religion, and the external rites replace true religion. (19)

Bābā Sawan Singh makes no secret of the fact that he views exoteric forms of religious practice as having no inner meaning. He, like many of his fellow Sants believe that any obsessive preoccupation with religious rituals and ceremonies ignore the reality that religion has a mystical core. True religion is essentially contemplative and so it must remain if an experience of God is to be attained. There can be no religious experience without meditation. Conventional religious devotionism is from the point of view of Sant Mat, self-deceit. Bābā Sawan Singh would argue that religion as we know it deceives man into believing that he is actually worshipping God when the fact of the matter is that religion binds him to a conditioned response to the sacred without providing him with the tool (i.e. the Satguru) necessary to transcend this form of conditioning in order to "be with God".

Bābā Sawan Singh's commitment to the spiritual dimension of religion is total. In his thinking there is virtually no room at all for religious sectarian beliefs. The following passage states this clearly:

Therefore religion, which was founded for the progress of the human soul, becomes its prison. Those who believe in sectarianism, do not consider other religions, creeds or sects besides their own of any worth at all. People show respect to their own bygone Mahatmas (Great Souls) and religious books, and have hatred for others. They become proud of their religion and are mentally enslaved and intolerant. Man creates bondage for himself and like a frog in the well, cannot think of anything beyond it. (20)

The rites and customs which were established by the founders of the various religions to show love for the Lord, detachment from the world and spiritual independence have in the hands of secretarianism, become chains and fetters. (21)

He is quick to stress that the place of worship need not necessarily be the true seat of worship. This is in line with the Sant precept that worship is a matter of the heart. This in turn is linked to the Sufi maxim that God resides in the human heart. The Tantric notion of the body as the temple of God is upper most in Bābā Sawan Singh's mind when he writes:

Sitting in these religious places we have to go inside our body, which is the real temple, mosque, gurdwara or church. The manner of worship is related to the feelings of the heart and not dependent upon any outside place or mode of worship. (22)

It would seem obvious that Bābā Sawan Singh finds that the purely exoteric viewpoint is not sufficient for understanding the force and persistence of religion. He concludes that if we are to understand in what way religion is true, we cannot remain on the exoteric level. We must move to the esoteric level, the inner spirit of the outer form.

Every religion, he believes has this dimension, usually found expressed by mystics of the various traditions.

If truth is universal, as truth must be, then Bābā Sawan Singh would argue that whatever is true in one religion is going to be expressed in some in some way in every religion. The exoteric is seen as embodying a symbolism of universal meaning, to which the esoteric, transcending the limitations imposed upon the exoteric, points. Pursuing the esoteric dimension, we see the whole which puts the parts in proper perspective. Although Bābā Sawan Singh does not explicitly say so, he most certainly would subscribe to the following view. Different religions, developing certain aspects of the overall truth and with a particular emphasis, may be placed in a complementary relationship. But religious eclecticism is not really desirable because it is not really necessary. For Bābā Sawan Singh each religion, when seen in its fullness, implicitly, if not explicitly, contains the whole.

One may be led to believe that Bābā Sawan Singh is guilty of devaluing the exoteric form of religion in that he could be seen to be promoting a kind of spiritual elitism. This assumption is inaccurate. Bābā Sawan Singh would agree that while the esoteric dimension may be recognized by only a few, it is in principle accessible to any believer who genuinely seeks it. But, in fact most believers are content with the exoteric level. In the Gurmat Siddhant the message implied seems to be that when the exoteric is no longer sufficient, the esoteric is available.

The distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric dimensions of religion is one of the key elements in Bābā Sawan Singh's essentialist outlook. He defines the exoteric as the outward dimension of a religion governing the whole life of a traditional culture whereas the esoteric, is to satisfy the inner needs of those who seek God here and now. It could be said that for Bābā Sawan Singh religion is like a circle. Most believers live on the periphery but the esoteric is an always available radius to the centre. Although he argues for the penetration of the outer core of any religious system, he does not reduce it to any thing less than what it is - a context bound configuration rendered impotent by superficialities.

Bābā Sawan Singh's subordination of the social dimension of religion is understandable given his status as a mystic. Some may choose to argue that this dimension is manifestly of some importance. Religion does not exist in a vacuum. Surely, it could be argued, it would be informative to see the impact of culture on the outer form of religion as it relates to the esoteric. Some may criticize Bābā Sawan Singh. They may say that, had he really aspired to a comprehensive view, he should have accounted for the social and historical dimensions in their own terms. But Bābā Sawan Singh appears to have surrendered this area by default to those not sensitive to the esoteric dimension who may be inclined to gauge religion differently than he does. To such critics Bābā Sawan Singh would reply in the following fashion. He does not deny that religions exist in their own environments. At the same time he has no desire to delve deeper into these environments since

it is these environments, which in his view make religion what it is not.

In the Gurmat Siddhant religion is defined as that which binds the sacred. Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of the term is exclusively esoteric. He writes that:

The path of communion with God is called Dharma (Religion). It is called Religion in English. "Religion" comes from the Latin word "religare" which means "to bind" or "to unite". The real purpose is hidden in the root of the word. Religion means re-uniting with God. (23)

He then proceeds to emphasize the need for recognizing that one's central concern should be for the spiritual evolution of man. Bābā Sawan Singh is not so much concerned with the regulation of affairs in the world but in entering into a state of higher consciousness. In the Gurmat Siddhant we read the following:

Man is a social being, but the real greatness of society also rests on spiritual progress. Just at the realization of the soul leads to happiness and without the soul the body is of no use, similarly spiritual progress raises the status of society. But, if there is no spiritual progress, the result is that narrow-mindedness, intolerance and selfishness prevail, and these lead to mutual wranglings, enmity and disputes among the various sects. (24)

The spiritual dimension of religion is of primary concern to Bābā Sawan Singh for one reason alone. It is the sphere in which spiritual liberation is achieved. Religion is equated here with the leading of a God-centred life. For him there can be no religion without

spirituality for to be genuinely religious is to be spiritual. Religion is and must be the religion of the spirit. Consequently the final aim of true religion must be to experience God. There can be no doubt about this as we see below. The reader is reminded that:

The real purpose of leading a spiritual life is that one should lift the veil of maya and matter, and recognize himself as soul, which is superconscious and is a particle of the ocean of superconsciousness so that he may blend into that ocean and take on its color and qualities, or in other words, the spiritual drop blends into the ocean of the Lord. (25)

Bābā Sawan Singh speaks of inner religion with the conviction of his fellow Sants and stresses the religion of the spirit as opposed to that of the mind and body. (26) There is no doubt in his mind that true worship amounts to practising "the religion of the soul" which in actual fact is taken to mean Surat Śabd Yoga. It is only by practising this discipline, we are told, that true knowledge of the divine self-expression can be attained. In what appears to be a reference to the principle of dying while living Bābā Sawan Singh writes:

We can find the Lord only after going inside. We will therefore have to look inside, where the treasure of happiness lies. The Lord pervades the whole universe in the form of Nam and Shabd. We cannot hear unless we withdraw from the outer noise and enter the inner silence. We can go inside and we can walk without feet, we can work without hands, we can hear without ears and we see without eyes. (27)

In asserting the status of Sant Mat as inner religion Bābā Sawan Singh makes the claim that it represents the esoteric core of all religions:

The teachings of Surat Shabd Yoga originally formed the basis of every religion but this base is disappearing and only formal rituals are now practised. The teachings of the Saints are not confined within the bounds of any book or creed, for they are the science of the soul. (28)

The claim that Sant Mat represents the esoteric core of all religions is a problematic one. One could argue that the question of the true core of all religions cannot be validly discussed by any representative of one particular tradition. In the case of the Gurmat Siddhānt the ultimate validity of Bābā Sawan Singh's chosen criteria is viewed as inherent in his own tradition and is therefore assumed and not argued for. This however, poses no problem for the mystic. What the scholar considers to be "assumed" is "realized" by the mystic. We are dealing here with different levels of apprehension. The scholar operates on the level of reasoned knowledge while a mystic like Bābā Sawan Singh talks of experienced inner knowledge. For him it is not a matter of knowing that something is the case but experiencing the reality involved. It is not that intellectual propositions are necessarily wrong but just that such dualistic understanding is not the required experience. One may, however, choose to argue that the claim that experience is self-confirming just isn't enough. If the experience has a powerful effect upon a person, this does not exempt the experience from the possibility of error. Besides experience does not necessarily place one in a privileged position compared to others. To this criticism Bābā Sawan Singh would in all likelihood reply that mystics with inner vision do not err since an experience of the

ultimate truth cannot be an error. He would also claim that only those who have had mystical experiences know of their special value.

Bābā Sawan Singh repeatedly stresses that the aims of Sant Mat are entirely spiritual. Spiritual emancipation and Sant Mat are considered synonymous. In the Gurmat Siddhānt this is clearly expressed in the following passage:

But the purpose of Sant Mat is wholly spiritual. It shows us how to investiate what the soul is, what its relationship with the Lord is and how to be reunited with Him. Thus one can release himself from all bondage in this very life and can experience him merge into Him. (29)

In emphasizing the spiritual nature of Sant Mat, Bābā Sawan Singh tends to equate it with Surat Śabd Yoga. This is not ~~only confusing~~ but also rather misleading. It confuses the philosophy with the method. Sant Mat is the mystic philosophy of the Saints of which Surat Śabd Yoga is a part. i.e its meditational discipline. Surat Śabd Yoga is therefore not Sant Mat per se as claimed below:

Sant Mat is another name for Surat Shabd Yoga. It is the inner experience of connecting the soul with the Lord. We call it Sant Mat or Teaching of the Saints. These teachings relate to the real principles of spirituality. (30)

There is no evidence in the Gurmat Siddhānt to suggest that Bābā Sawan Singh claims that Sant Mat possesses a superior epistemic status over and against other religions. He does not seek to establish that Sant Mat is a mystical system superior to others. We do not encounter any statements that point to him proclaiming that the mystical experience

of Sant Mat is a phenomenologically distinct form of experience, superior to other forms of mystical experiences.

Unlike Swāmī Vivekananda for example, (31) Bābā Sawan Singh does not advocate the elevation of one mystical path over all other paths. He does not engage in any proselitizing activity by proclaiming that Sant Mat is the one true faith. Neither does he suggest that the religious experiences of other religions are incomplete or delusive. Although he does claim that Surat Śabd Yoga is a higher form of yoga (32) he does not go so far as to proclaim that it has a monopoly on truth. He does take into consideration the possibility of different perceptions of truth of the different religious traditions. He does however, say that on the esoteric level these truths are the same. (33) Bābā Sawan Singh does not presuppose that the highest truth is the truth as he sees it. Had he done so he would have been guilty of indulging in inadmissible philosophizing because each religion has its own claims about the truth. Each religion sets forth its own truth proposals and for Bābā Sawan Singh to have claimed that Sant Mat is the proposal would have amounted to him promoting a form of spiritual elitism.

Bābā Sawan Singh agrees that some room must be left for the other truths that have been experienced and accepted as a performance of truth in the different religious settings. He does not ignore other encounters with mystical reality. It could be said of him that he accepts the fact that all approaches in religion are but relative to the absolute truth. The only conviction that he sees as being common to all traditions is that there is an absolute truth. Like Gandhi and

Radhakrishnan Bābā Sawan Singh advocates respect and reverence of all faiths. He advocates receptiveness to the truths and ideals of other faiths so as to ensure the avoidance of dogmatism and intolerance. He writes that:

We should deeply study all religions and find out the common fundamental principles so that enstrangement amongst various religions may be removed. We have respect for all the past religions, the same ideals and methods lie at their foundations. We have respect for all the Mahatmas (great souls) who have reached the Supreme Region or who will do so in the future, and for the description of their experiences. (34)

The "Mystical Core" Proposition

One of the propositions put forward in the Gurmat Siddhānt is that all religions are one, their superficial differences notwithstanding, since they are all one in essence. He views all religions as one in that they are all means to an end- furnishing man with insights into the nature of ultimate reality. Bābā Sawan Singh sets the essence as the core of all religions by assuming that all religions have the same mystical core. He does not however, go as far as to claim that the experience of this mystical core (i.e. mystical union) is qualitatively the same for all religions. He would, not disclaim that there are as many types of introvertive theistic mystical experiences as there are religions and frameworks used to interpret them. What he does say however, is that the all religions have as their mystical core an experience of God.

Religions may appear diverse, in their more significant inner core they share basic affirmations about the nature of their ultimate goal. This assertion, (35) seen as problematic by some, (36) is mentioned repeatedly in the Gurmat Siddhānt. In one of his statements Bābā Sawan Singh states the following:

The different religious books were written at different times, and the modes of worship and rituals given in them are those that were prevalent at those times. The object was to create love for the Lord and to meet Him face to face. Just as there may be many archers but their target is one, similarly the object of all worship is the same. (37)

Bābā Sawan Singh clearly supports the essentialist notion of religion as a self-subsisting essence or transcendental entity underlying all historical manifestations. His view is that there is basically one religion and the differences that exist between them are ones of appearance. He sees all religions as having a common goal and a common ground in the divine spirit. He writes:

Whether mosques or temples, they are getting light from the same Candle. The wonder is why is there hostility between them. The main object of those visiting a mosque, a temple, a gurdwara or a church is the communion with the Lord. In spite of the differences in the shape of the stones the color of the fire obtained by rubbing them together is the same. (38)

The sacred books of the Hindus are in Sanskrit, those of the Muslims in Arabic or Persian, the Gurbani of Sikhs in Punjabi Hindi and so forth. The Bible and other scriptures are in English and Latin. Sacred books were written in different languages so far as the Lord is concerned they are all means of experiencing love for God and we learn about Reality through them. (39)

Bābā Sawan Singh concedes that each historical religion is a distinct form of religion apprehended in a different way. He is saying that divine revelation is given through the different world religions and is revealed to man in accordance with his ability to perceive this revelation. The statement above could also be seen as generating the following understanding. All religions are equal in that they are equally valid in the sense that each views his religion as valid. This is the Neo-Hindu position. This position states that different religions are valid for different peoples. (40)

It could also be argued that Bābā Sawan Singh advocates a unity of religions that does not deny religious feeling its specific form and content but asserts that unity exists in diversity. In the words of Nasr it could be said of Bābā Sawan Singh that he:

while asserting categorically the fact that all paths lead to the same summit seeks to penetrate into the meaning of the symbols, images and doctrines which constitute a particular religious universe but does not try to reduce them to anything other than what they are within that distinct universe of meaning. (41)

Bābā Sawan Singh does not contest the existence of historical religious traditions but claims that truth unites at a level beyond the spatio-temporality of historical contexts. He argues that since truth is universal, so are religions and their histories. But since history cannot transcend itself it remains an empirical fact unlike truth which can do so. Truth, it is being said is one but histories are many.

The "mystical core of religions" thesis like the one formulated in the Gurmat Siddhānt has often been considered problematic by historicists. Smith for instance, argues that it is a methodologically misplaced priority to seek the unity in religion in its essence rather than in its history. To do so would mean abandoning the specific contextual nature of religious life and ignoring historical interconnectedness. (42) Smith argues that the idea of transcendental essence distracts one from a global awareness of religious consciousness in that it separates and absolutizes theological truth from historical facts, something he views as "unwarranted bifurcation". (43) Smith also contends that the idea of essence is distasteful in that it fails to perceive religion as a historical on going process.

In other words, the metaphysical core of religion, whatever that might be, cannot and should not be seen to be isolatable from its empirical periphery (i.e. tradition). Transcendental exclusivism, of the kind Bābā Sawan Singh advocates would, in Smith's view, move one away from an understanding of the evolving structure of religion as a historical fact and as such is inaccurate. By postulating a common transcendental common denominator, Bābā Sawan Singh, it would be argued, denies one the right to develop meaningful historical criteria by which all religious traditions must be judged.

What historicists like Smith assert is that the history of religion is directly relevant to the development of a cross-cultural philosophy of religion. This, however, is not to be achieved in an easy, monolithic abstracting reassuring way through the essence of religion. They argue

that attempts to by pass metaphysical and theological differences among the religious traditions by treating the core of religion as the same cross-culturally is both initially and ultimately false to the data. They feel that there is no easy way around the problem of differences. The divergences among the religious traditions are not accidental or incidental. Theological, philosophical, behavioral and institutional differences are intrinsic components in the task facing a cross-cultural philosophy of religion. Mystical experience, historicists claim does not transcend these differences. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the suggestion is that since all religions share the same esoteric core it is conceivable that mystical experience is cross-culturally identifiable. In other words Bābā Sawan Singh believes that there is such a thing as pure unmediated mystical consciousness isolated from social, philosophical and theological contexts.

Contextualists like Katz (44) and those in his camp (45) have often argued that all essentialist theories of religion are problematic in that they foster unacceptable reductions by forcing:

multifarious and extremely variegated forms of mystical experience into improper interpretative categories which lose sight of the fundamentally important differences. (46)

The objections that pluralists like Katz would probably direct at Bābā Sawan Singh can be summarized as follows. The essentialist approach to mystical experience takes descriptions of mystical experience out of its contexts thus depriving it of its grounds for comparability. In so doing mystical experience is emptied of its meaning for it is in its religious context that mystical experience gains the fullness of

meaning. The essentialist notion of the unity of religions is therefore unacceptable. It rules out the possibility of cross-cultural differences which are to be seen as context bound since different religions sees different things in mystical experience. Nowhere in the Gurmat Siddhant is the contrary asserted. However, the point to be noted is that Bābā Sawan Singh is concerned about the transcendental essence of religion. Unlike Katz he is not concerned about contexts. He is talking about that which transcends existing differences. The existence of these empirical differences is not denied by Bābā Sawan Singh.

Katz also argues that the conceptual background of a subject enters into the very constitution of the subject's experience. He claims (but does not substantiate with arguments) that even in mystical experience there seems to be epistemological activity (47) and concludes that there can be no pure unmediated mystical experience. (48) For him all experiences are processed through, organized by and made available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways (which he does not elaborate or comment upon). The notion of a cross-culturally unmediated core of religious experience is to him empty and self-contradictory. We are told that we are contextual beings because of the sort of beings we are. (49)

Katz's critique is based primarily on the argument that mystical experiences that generate descriptions of them are different in different religious traditions. He feels that mystics of different traditions interpret their experience in different ways. (50) This is

not disputed. However, mystics prefer to believe that there is one mystical experience that is cross-culturally identifiable. For Bābā Sawan Singh this is the experience of mystical communion with God. This experience can be cross-culturally identified. He believes that while being experienced this experience cannot be culturally pegged since this experience de-structures our normal conceptual framework that structures sensory stimuli. Katz rejects this claim as empty. What Katz tends to forget is that such claims have to be understood in the context of the primordialist ontological structure of being. It allows for mystics in their intuitive moments to invoke a kind of knowing that rises above sensation, images and concepts.

In arguing for a recognition of differences Katz also ignores the fact that there is one difference that is crucial. This is the difference between occasions on which differences are important, and other occasions and contexts in which similarities call for attention. Everything obviously both resembles and differs from every other being: resembles in that both; and differ or there would be not be two things but one. This being so, when should one emphasize one pole, when the other? Claims for similarities and differences spin their wheels until they get down to ways and degrees in which things differ or are alike. These variables shift with the problem one is working on. Katz overlooks this problem and in so doing by passes most of the interesting and important issues associated with it.

The claim of perennial philosophy is not that of mundane empiricism. To discuss a metaphysical truth such as religion's essential unity

does not require one to have a mental experience. Pure intellection must be distinguished from rational argumentation. Ratio is not intellectus and has nothing to do with states of pure consciousness. Intuition brings one more or less into contact with a reality of a higher ontological order. Contextualists like Katz ^{step out of} metaphysics, their arguments are phenomenological throughout. Mystics like Bābā Sawan Singh have no need for phenomenological deliberations.

Returning to the question of historical context it must be said that essentialism of the kind advocated by Bābā Sawan Singh is too easily dismissed as anti-historicism. On reading the Gurmat Siddhānt one does not get the impression that unity is argued for at the cost of diversity. On the contrary, Bābā Sawan Singh believes that the very existence of diverse religious traditions makes the very idea of an essence plausible. He does also make some attempt to work with the idea of a historical perspective. He does presuppose a distinction between, on the one hand, man's encounters in the various forms of religious experience and on the other, the theological theories that man has developed to conceptualize the meanings of these encounters. His reference to the various religions and sacred scriptures is proof enough of this.

A further point is that Bābā Sawan Singh agrees that religious experience and religious expression co-exist side by side. He does not deny that the different experiences of mystical reality interacting over the centuries with different though forms of different cultures has led to increasing differentiation and contrasting elaborations. He

is not blind to the multiplicity of religious expressions resulting from the different religious experiences. He is not blind to the cultural history of religion. In short, Bābā Sawan Singh is not an anti-historicist. It is just that he chooses to exercise his right as a mystic to judge religion in a landscape which no historicist has probably ever treaded.

Another argument critical of the primordialist notion of a mystical core centres on the problem of typologies. Contextualists are prone to pointing out that essentialists often ignore the possibility of subdividing mystical experience into different types. Associated with this view is also the critique that the essentialist does not pay sufficient attention to the various stages of attainment by which mystics subdivide their experiences. It could be said of Bābā Sawan Singh that he defines that experience which only points to the final stage of spiritual realization. It could be argued that a consideration of the states leading up to the final stage within a particular tradition may yield a wider variety of experiences than expected.

In the Gurmat Siddhant Bābā Sawan Singh does not discuss typologies. Neither does he attempt to identify the phenomenological characteristics of mystical experience. He is also not concerned with questions pertaining to the epistemological status of the mystical experience. Having said this, it is worth noting that there is a large body of literature dealing with detailed and amply documented analyses and classifications of the phenomenological types of mystical experience. (51) However, what exists in the form of academic

investigations is of no interest to Bābā Sawan Singh. Also one tends sometimes to forget that typologies are far too often based on deliberations which propose improper categories. (52) There also is the question of the usefulness of such constructions as typologies. (53)

The "Mystical Communion" Proposition

The next key proposition that we find in the Gurmat Siddhānt in relation to the "mystical core" thesis is the idea of communion with God (54). Bābā Sawan Singh presupposes that God reveals himself in every religion and that the the essence of every religion is to be found in the mystical experience of divine communion. This would be like arguing that all mystical ways of life are ultimately the same because the same ultimate reality is involved. This claim is problematic in that it is based on the assumption with regard to the nature of the ultimate. Also there is no reason outside the normative position to consider what is being postulated.

To say that the goal of all religions is communion with God is to say that all religious doctrines have a common core. This is a disturbing proposition. It is one matter to use general terms for classes of concepts (for example, mystical communion) but it is another matter to say that any general term conveys the total interpretation of a specific religious or mystical tradition. There is no abstract

mysticism but only concrete mystics and tradition, it has sometimes been argued. (55)

Bābā Sawan Singh's definition of religion is based primarily and exclusively on one criterion that is mystical communion with God. In doing so he sets it as the essence at the core of religion and assumes that all religions have the same spiritual core. He does not search for each religion's understanding of mystical communion. Instead he sets the essence as a standard truth by a priori reflection. This means that when he postulates mystical communion as being the core of religion he does not rely on any empirical tested hypothesis but applies an intuitive sense of plausibility buttressed by faith. He could therefore be criticized for depriving each tradition of its uniqueness and authenticity. It could be said that Bābā Sawan Singh is not sensitive to both the points of divergence and the similarities between religious traditions and different categories of mysticism. To only see similarities, ignoring the differences and claiming that all religions are the same is, to quote Green, "like retreating into a hazy cosmic Oneness and rejecting or ignoring the material world of diversity". (56) Furthermore, acknowledging the historico-cultural plurality of religion, it has been argued, is not only necessary but also desirable. Radhakrishnan for example, argues that this recognition contributes:

inalienably to the richness of specifically human experiences; it provides an opportunity for displaying the multi faceted convergence of the different strands of religion. (57)

Bābā Sawan Singh "unity of religions" thesis is an attempt at the resolution of the problem of religious pluralism by appealing to mystical experience. He maintains that religions are only incompatible from a relative and not from an absolute perspective. He justifies this by saying that one may dispute theologies but not the existence of God. His theistic conviction dictates that the possibility of the non-existence of God be logically precluded. Like Śrī Aurobindo (58) Bābā Sawan Singh sees the existence of God as being the imperative justification of religion. The following statement illustrates this:

True religion is that experience which leads to firm faith in the existence of God, and to the attainment of supreme bliss. The universe should appear as His manifestation and we should feel the urge to serve Him. (59)

When Bābā Sawan Singh says that every religion's core is the communion with God he is effectively saying that the fact that God is experiencable points to His existence. Like Radhakrishnan (60) it is said in the Gurmat Siddhānt that to say that God exists means to confirm the attainability of the spiritual experience of God. It is the possibility of this experience that constitutes the most conclusive proof of the reality of God. God is viewed as given and is the factual content of mystical experience.

This line of reasoning is fairly straight forward. What is more problematic is the claim made in the Gurmat Siddhānt that all believers worship the same God. Bābā Sawan Singh teaches that:

One should not get entangled in ignorance.
We are to worship the same God. Our Guru

Dev is the same. All are images of the Lord
and the same light is working in them. (61)

The message here is that every religion has as its core a communion which constitutes a cosmic principle in the same one God. Bābā Sawan Singh appears to be reducing the religious quest to the one defined in Sant Mat. Having in his scheme no place for non-theism he sees all religions as being theistic. He then proceeds to claim that all theistic religions have the same God as their object of worship.

This claim is not without its problems. It does not take into account that each religion has its own manner of speaking about the ultimate truth. Buddhism for example, must speak in a way that sets aside the language of God as finally meaningful. Faith in God for the Christian, in turn requires certain kinds of speech and experiences within the Semitic family of faiths. Bābā Sawan Singh it would appear, fails to recognize that each religion has its own categories which link it to an experience of the Divine. Each religion sets forth a theological proposal and for Bābā Sawan Singh to claim that is proposal is the same for all religions at the transcendental level is to engage in inadmissible generalizing. To this, Bābā Sawan Singh's reply in all probability would be the following. This knowledge of "the same God" is the product of an inner experience which is self-confirming at the level of the transcendental and is the same for all religions. It does not require rationalizing.

The "Transcendental Experience" Proposition

We now move to the final proposition in the context of Bābā Sawan Singh's "unity of religions" thesis. He claims that the mystical experience of divine communion fundamental to all religions is ineffable, self-validating and trans-subjective.

One of the statements that we find in the Gurmat Siddhānt implies that the experience of mystical communion has a set of characteristics common to that experience in all ages, cultures and religious traditions. One such characteristics refers to ineffability. Bābā Sawan Singh proclaims the following:

Spirituality is the knowledge of the soul and inner regions, and the science of experiencing and realising the Lord and merging into Him, which is in reality extraordinary and beyond description. (62)

This statement conveys something about the relationship between verbal expression and mystical experience. It suggests that mystical experience is incommunicable in words. It could also mean that any understanding of the experience can be communicated but not the experience itself. (63) In this sense the experience is incommunicable. (64) What is being claimed here is that the spiritual realm is one that cannot be totally comprehended by analysis which defines it solely in terms of material energy or social forces. (65) Any discussion of the mystical is said to involve a mode of awareness foreign to experiencing it. A mystical experience like mystical communion is not one sense experience among others but its content is

wholly other. This argument could be linked to the use of language. It could be argued that language has arisen within and as an integral part of a non-mystical point of view oriented around sense experience. Only by removing that by which language may operate can one realize the mystical. (66) This is what Bābā Sawan Singh also means by "ineffable".

Critics are quick to point out that since the experience of the mystical is ineffable its ineffability does mystical experience a disservice in that it cancels out language.. This then makes the making of any intelligible statement about the mystical impossible. Katz, for example, has been known to argue that if what mystics say about their experiences is ineffable, nothing can be said about it in words, and so the mystic does not mean what he says. This being the case he cannot establish any view about mystical experience. (67)

Sadly Katz is confusing ineffability with unintelligibility. Instead of taking ineffability to mean empty of cognitive meaning it should mean beyond language and mind patterns. Unfortunately Katz is so preoccupied with problems relating to the use of "our" language in communicating about mystical experiences, that he betrays a certain naivety regarding the properties of mystical experience.

Ineffability in the mystical context, far from saying nothing makes a major claim. The claim in question is that mystics can under exceptional conditions "see" things that transcend language as we understand it. Every mode of consciousness, mystical consciousness,

has an irreducibility about it. We cannot hope to satisfactorily explain mystical experience by anything other than mystical criteria, just as we cannot explain aesthetic appreciation in scientific terms. We must learn to understand and appreciate mysticism in terms of its own language.

It can also be said of Bābā Sawan Singh that his notion of ineffability is based on the theological belief that God is Himself indescribable or incomprehensible. It follows from this that the experience of the Divine must also be incommunicable. (68) It is argued that since God has no attributes which can be described in human language there can be no cognizable content to the mystical experience of God.

• In the Gurmat Siddhānt we also find statements regarding the self-validating status of mystical experience. (69) In one of his statements Bābā Sawan Singh teaches that the truth of the existence of God as reflected in Sant Mat is "truth above and beyond proof" and notes that:

The teachings of the Saints are self-proving.
No outside evidence is required to prove them.
The sun is self-refulgent, and there is no
necessity to prove it by comparing it with
a candle. (70)

Critics are quick to question such assertions on the following grounds. They contend that mystical experience does not discount the possibility of error concerning the status and nature of the mystical. There is talk of the possibility of immediate awareness causing an

overemphasis being placed upon the importance of experience. One could also argue that even if no other experience could shake the sense of importance attached to mystical experience, it does not necessarily follow that this certainty can be transferred to interpretative systems. A mystic would dismiss such arguments as "irrelevant" to the absolute truth of the experience of God. Bābā Sawan Singh would probably insist that it is only the intellectual mind that is caught up in this "proof trap".

Another possible objection is that mystical experience alone is no evidence for the superiority of one position since alternative interpretations are possible. Mystical experience is not a unique source of establishing doctrines. This does not, however, reduce mystical experience to speculative metaphysics independent of experience. Knowledge claims are justified by clusters of factors from both experience and conception. An experience may be decisive for convincing one of a doctrinal truth, but this says little about the special status of the experience. (71)

Furthermore, even if those who have had mystical experience have the psychological motivation to endorse a mystical position it does not follow that the experience is conclusive proof of a position. Therefore one could draw the conclusion that mystical experience does not place some people in a privileged epistemological position in this regard. (72) Such an argument however, rests on a specific understanding of the term "epistemological". The mystic does not operate on the level of the epistemology of the philosophy of

religion, which is constructed on a mental experience. The claim Bābā Sawan Singh would make in his defence would probably be that what the mystic truly "knows" through experience can only be "talked about" by the philosopher of religion. The mystic is quite content to allow the philosopher of religion to engage in his "mind games".

Contextualists have also been known to contest the claim that mystical experiences are self-proving. Katz for instance says that he fails to find any verifiable evidence to support the assertion that mystical experience translates into religious truths. He explains his views as follows. Mystical experience cannot generate any veridical proposition. As a consequence mystical experience is not and logically cannot be the ground for any final assertion about the nature of truth in any religious belief. Since he does not see mystical experience as being translatable into evidence for a given religious proposition he proclaims it irrelevant in establishing the truth or falsity of religious belief. (73) In arguing that mystical experience is no proof of evidence of religious truth Katz implies that mystics should be required to state logically sound propositions and philosophically defend their claims. This absurd proposition fails to take into account the manner in which mystics operate.

As far as Bābā Sawan Singh is concerned he can see no reason for being perturbed by such mundane observations. The mystic does not need to justify what he experiences mystically. To attempt to provide a justification would mean imposing the standards of one mode of discourse (i.e. scientific, rationalistic) unto another (i.e.

religious, mystical). The facts of mystical experience suggest to us that it is possible to rise above our limited ego-centred, fragmented consciousness to see the whole and not only a facet of the whole. This involves transcending the subject-object duality since mystical experience cannot properly be called either or objective. Bābā Sawan Singh sees mystical experience delivering supramental truths, the validity of which cannot be judged by logical analysis. Intellectual concepts he might argue, must instead be tested by inner vision. Reason is useful on the level of the mind to sharpen one's expression and affirmation of truth, but reason must be illuminated from above. Reason is not in error, but it is limited in ignorance. Since Bābā Sawan Singh sees higher levels of understanding above the mind he affirms the priority of knowing on higher levels. Since logical reason by definition is found on lower less enlightened levels, intuitive knowledge, the means of higher knowing is to be preferred.

It would seem fitting here to confirm Bābā Sawan Singh's views on the self-validating quality of mystical experience by referring to what Śrī Aurobindo has to say about the unique status of mystical reality. It is Śrī Aurobindo's view that:

Religion is the seeking after the spiritual, the suprarational and therefore in this sphere the intellectual reason may well be an inefficient help and find itself, not only at the end but from the beginning, out of its province and condemned to tread either diffidently or else with a presumptuousness in the realm of a power and light higher than its own. (74)

Finally, we examine the claim that mystical experience is transconceptual. He defines the essence of religion in experiential terms. He emphasizes that the essential knowledge that one attains is intuitive rather than intellectual. Bābā Sawan Singh believes that man is able to participate in the process of consciousness development at suprarational levels. He contends that in order to claim that mystical experience reveals the true reality one is not obliged to intellectualize about it. The following passages express this sentiment:

Spiritual life is not a topic for reading and writing. It is something to be realised by personal experience. Personal realization of the Lord is something far superior to Dharma, books, laws, etc. This is the reality behind all remembrance, austerity, worship, reading, singing and playing music, but it is also separate from them. (75)

We cannot see the Lord with physical eyes. We can only experience (realize) Him by going inside and crossing the astral and causal planes. We can realize Him by devotion and love and not by thinking. In order to accomplish this we should reach the regions of pure consciousness above ourselves. Spiritual life is the name given to a life of communion with God and not merely thinking about Him. (76)

Bābā Sawan Singh's claim that mystical experience is transconceptual could be construed as lending support to the claim that mystical testimony is unanimous in essence. Since truth must always be in agreement with itself, mystical truth wherever it is found must be in essential agreement with itself. Specific traditional contexts in which mystical experience occurs can therefore be ignored. Common

factors in the universal mystical experience can be abstracted and generalized without respect to content. Extracted from its contexts, mystical experience transcends linguistic, cultural, philosophical and theological differences. In the Gurmat Siddhant the experience, of divine communion is presented as being a sort of transcendental universal vision.

Summary

This chapter examined Bābā Sawan Singh's views on the essential nature of religion. It highlighted the key propositions which most clearly reflected the contents of the "unity of religions" thesis in the Gurmat Siddhant.

We commenced by pointing out that Bābā Sawan Singh distinguished between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of religion, which he called social and spiritual respectively. We highlighted the belief that institutionalized religion and its diverse forms was contrary to the inner spirit of religion which was seen to be essentially unitary. The feeling conveyed here pointed to the need to distinguish between inner religious experience and outer religious expression. In the context of this discussion we saw Bābā Sawan Singh that the outer place of worship need not necessarily be the true seat of genuine inner devotion.

After having noted how the term religion was esoterically defined we examined what was said in the Gurmat Siddhānt about Sant Mat being the spiritual dimension of religion and the esoteric core of all religions. We pointed out that such a claim was problematic and questioned the validity of such an assertion. We also highlighted the fact that although Bābā Sawan Singh tended to place Sant Mat on a pedestal he did not propose it to be "the religion of religions".

In discussing the "mystical core" proposition we studied the contention that all religions have the same mystical core. We questioned Bābā Sawan Singh's notion of religion as a self-subsisting essence with a common goal and ground in God. We then concluded that in the Gurmat Siddhānt no contradiction was seen to exist between religious tradition and religious truth. The latter was seen as uniting the former on the transcendental level.

In reviewing contextualist criticisms of the "mystical core" proposition we demonstrated that Bābā Sawan Singh was not engaged in promoting transcendental exclusivism. What emerged out of the discussion was that both essentialists and contextualists view the status of religious tradition and history differently. We pointed out that phenomenological criticisms of the "mystical core" thesis were inadequate for understanding the transcendental. Central to this argument was the view that mystics have an entirely different perspective of the role of religious experience and knowledge from that of the contextualist.

Our study of the proposition concerning mystical communion focussed on the disturbing assumption made that God reveals Himself in every religion. We criticized Bābā Sawan Singh's theistic bias. We pointed out that he did not search for each religion's understanding of ultimate reality, but chose instead to define it from the viewpoint of Sant Mat.

We next looked at the statements made pertaining to the experience of divine communion^{ca} being ineffable, self-validating and transcendental.

We first studied the implications of Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of the term ineffable. This was followed by a dismissal of the contextualist interpretation of the term. It was argued here that such interpretations revealed a lack of understanding of the relationship between mystical experience and the use of language.

In defending Bābā Sawan Singh's statements regarding the self-validating nature of the mystical experience we argued that epistemological and phenomenological criticisms were of little use and ineffective. We maintained that it was meaningless and futile to try to judge mystical reality with the tools of logical analysis.

Finally, we examined the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh presented his beliefs about the transcendental quality of the experience of mystical communion. We stressed that a purely experiential view of mystical

reality was involved. The conclusion here was that mystical experience was seen as being a sort of suprarational universal vision.

NOTES

1. Essentialism is synonymous with primordialism. The essentialist view of religion is the direct antithesis of the view presented by the contextualist. The terms essentialist and primordialist are used interchangeably in this study. The same applies to the terms contextualist and historicist.
2. A critical examination of the various formulations of the Neo-Hindu position and the various understandings these formulate is the subject of an article by A. Sharma entitled "All religions are equal? one? true? same?: A critical examination of some formulations of the neo-Hindu position", in Philosophy East and West 29 (1979), pp. 59-72. The formulations examined are, "All religions are equal", "All religions are one", "All religions are true", and "All religions are the same". Sharma improves considerably on an earlier study by Zaehner who does not distinguish perceptibly between the various formulations of the Neo-Hindu position and the different understandings the formulations cited above might generate. See R.C. Zaehner, The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths (London, 1971).
3. The shared affirmations of some of the most vocal representatives of the essentialist position in the West, namely Fritjof Schuon, Huston Smith and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, have been critically summarized by J.R. Robinson in an untitled review article in Religious Studies Review 10 (1984), pp. 348-353.
4. Radhakrishnan presents his essentialist views in Eastern Religions and Western Thought (London, 1940) and The Hindu View of Life (London, 1988). Critical appraisals of his views on the nature of religion appear in J. Lipner, "Radhakrishnan on Religion and Religions", in Scottish Journal of Religious Studies 10 (1989), pp. 123-137 and G. Richards, "The One and the Many: an Analysis of Radhakrishnan's Concept of Religion", in Scottish Journal of Religious Studies 10 (1989), pp. 138-150.
5. Swami Vivekananda outlines his views on religion in The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol I and II (Calcutta, 1970 and 1971). These views have been briefly discussed by J. Prentice, A Study of the Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda (M.Litt thesis University of Stirling, 1987), see pp. 250-280.
6. See Sri Aurobindo's Collected Works Vol XXVI (Pondicherry, 1972). For an analysis of his negation of the so-called "non-essentials" of religion see R.N. Minor, "Sri Aurobindo's Integral View of Other Religions", in Religious Studies 15 (1979), pp. 365-377.
7. See F. Schuon, The Transcendent Unity of Religion (New York, 1978) and Logic and Transcendence (New York, 1975). Schuon's works have been reviewed by Robinson in the already mentioned article. See pp. 348-349.

8. Huston Smith's perennial philosophy is presented in Forgotten Truth. The Primordial Tradition (New York 1976) and Beyond the Post Modern Mind (New York 1982). This philosophy has been critically examined in C.A. Raschke, "Religious Pluralism and Truth. From Theology to Hermeneutical Dialogy", in Journal of the American Academy of Religion 50 (1982), pp. 35-41.
9. S.H. Nasr, Knowledge and the Sacred. The Glifford Lectures (Edinburgh, 1981), p 1.
10. Nasr developes his views on the weaknesses of phenomenological approaches to the study of religion in Knowledge and the Sacred. The Gifford Lectures. See chapters 2-4. Nasr's notion of "desacralized knowledge" is criticized by M.S. Raschid, "Philosophia Perennis Universale Imperium" in Religion 15 (1983), pp. 155-171.
11. The phraseology is based on the one used by K. Werner, "The Concept of the Transcendent. Questions of Method in the History of Religions", in Religion 15 (1983), p. 312.
12. Gurmat Siddhant Vol.V p. 1.
13. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. lxxxii.
14. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xi.
15. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xvii.
16. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.
17. Such views have also been attributed to Radhakrishnan and Śrī Aurobindo. See Lipner, "Radhakrishnan on Religion and Religions", p. 127 and Minor, "Śrī Aurobindo's Integral View of Other Religions", p. 366.
18. Gurū Nānak's criticism of Nāth yōgi preoccupation with rituals would serve as a good illustration. The points raised by Gurū Nānak have already been highlighted in chapter V of this study.
19. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xlii. See also p. xxxvii of the same volume for a statement to the same effect.
20. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xliii.
21. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xliii.
22. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xix.
23. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xxxvi.
24. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. 1.
25. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. V p. xlvi.

26. See Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. xix and xx.

27. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V pp. xlviii-xlix. Bābā Sawan Singh appears to be paraphrasing from the second half of a passage in the Ādi Granth. Var Majh Shloka M2 (1) p. 139 reads:

To see without eyes, to hear without ears,
To walk without feet, to do without hands,
To speak without the tongue, Live thou thus,
thus being Dead (to thyself)
And Realise thou the Lord's Will, and thus
Unite with thy Lord.

28. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. lv.

29. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. 1. See also Vol. IV p. liv.

30. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. xxxix.

31. Swāmī Vivekananda acknowledges that each religion takes its own path to the realization of the goal of mystical union. He does, however, place Advaita Vedānta above other paths as superior. See Richards, "The One and the Many: an Analysis of Radhakrishnan's Concept of Religion", p. 144. A similar point is made by Prentice, A Study of the Philosophy Of Swami Vivekānanda, p. 264.

32. Bābā Sawan Singh however, does not claim that Surat Sabd Yoga can bring about spiritual growth like no other path can. All that is said is that Surat Sabd Yoga is a more efficient meditational discipline.

33. See for example Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. xxvi. The claim that the truths of all religions are the same is problematic. All religions have their own notions of what truth is.

34. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol V p. lx.

35. Bābā Sawan Singh does not show how as distinctly from merely asserting that all religions are united at the level of the absolute. However, most arguments that have been levelled against the practice of making unqualified assertions are of no importance to the mystic. He sees arguments as "unmystical activity".

36. Jones for instance, argues that to assert that all religions say the same thing cannot be deduced from mystics' claims. See R.H. Jones, "Experience and Conceptualization in Mystical Knowledge", in Zygon 18 (1983), p. 153. Unfortunately Jones also indulges in mere assertions. All he does is make assertions about some assertions that mystics make.

37. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. xxii.

38. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. IV p. xxviii. See also p. xxxiii of the same volume.

39. Gurmat Siddhant Vol. IV p. xxvii.

40. Radhakrishnan in presenting this position writes:

Everyman should follow his own religion.
A Christian should follow Christianity,
a Mohammadan should follow Mohammadanism
and so forth. For the Hindus the path,
the path of the Aryan sages is best.

As a mother, in nursing her sick children,
gives rice and curry to one, and sago and
arrowroot to another and bread and butter
to a third, so the Lord has laid out different
paths for different people suitable to their
nature.

(Quoted from H. Smith, The Religions
of Man [New York, 1965], pp. 86-87).

41. S. H. Nasr, Knowledge and the Sacred. The Gifford Lectures, p. 293.

42. See W. C. Smith, Towards a World Theology (London, 1981), pp. 3-44 where he argues for a theology of religious histories.

43. W. C. Smith Towards a World Theology, p. 18.

44. We have chosen Katz as the leading proponent of the contextualist school because his writings make perhaps the greatest show of announcing their philosophical sophistication. They in fact contain a fuller presentation of the contextualist view than some other defences. His main contribution is the essay "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", in S. Katz, (ed.), Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis (London, 1978), pp. 22-75.

45. One of the strongest defences of the Katzian position is J. V. Apezynski, "Mysticism and Epistemology", in Religion 14 (1985), pp. 193-205.

46. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 25.

47. "Epistemological activity" could be taken to mean interpretation. Curiously enough Katz does not devise any definitional scheme or typology of interpretation, something Smart attempts. See N. Smart, "Interpretation and Religious Experience", in Religious Studies 1 (1965), pp. 75-87.

48. For an alternative view see W. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy (London, 1960), p. 74.

49. This view appears to be based on T. Kuhn's, Structure of Scientific Revolution (Chicago, 1976) and P. Feyerabend's, "Explanation, Reduction and Empiricism", in H. Feigl and G. Maxwell,

(eds.), Scientific Explanation. Space and Time (Minnesota, 1962), pp. 28-87. Both argue that if the meaning of a term or experience is determined by the theoretical context in which it is employed no terms figuring in different contexts can share their meaning. Katz has been criticized for operationalizing this contextual theory of meaning in an unqualified manner. Petrovich convincingly argues that Katz fails to distinguish between changes that leave meaning unaltered and those that do. Katz is also taken to task for not establishing criteria for determining which concepts and doctrines enter into the meaning of an experience and which do not. This highly complex debate appears in A.N. Petrovich Jr., "Mysticism and the Philosophy of Science", in Journal of Religion 65 (1985), pp. 63-83.

50. What Katz does not tell us is that different religions need not preclude shared religious experiences.

51. Such studies apart from the ones by Katz and Stace mentioned earlier include, R.C. Zaehner, Mysticism Sacred and Profane (London, 1978) and F. Staal, Exploring Mysticism (Middlesex, 1975).

The contributions of most of these scholars has been summarized by D. Green, "Unity in Diversity", in Scottish Journal of Religious Studies 1 (1982), pp. 46-58. See also P.G. Moore, "Recent Studies in Mysticism: A Critical Survey", in Religion 3 (1973), pp. 146-156.

52. This is one of the criticisms of typologies discussed by H. Smith, "Is there a Perennial Philosophy?", in Journal of the American Academy of Religion LV (1987), p. 557.

53. For a discussion pertaining to the presuppositions and operative principles of typologies and the limitations involved see S. Milligan, "The Diverse Types of Mysticism", in The Illif Review 45 (1988), pp. 66-67.

54. In the Gurmat Siddhant the terms union and communion are loosely used interchangeably. Bābā Sawan Singh uses union to mean merging in God. Communion refers to partaking of the divine essence of God. To avoid any confusion we shall stick to the term communion when referring to the Gurmat Siddhant. Strictly speaking, Bābā Sawan Singh is usually speaking about communion even when the term union is used.

55. See Jones, "Experience, Conceptualization and Mystical Knowledge", p. 154.

56. D Green, A Study of Mysticism and Its Forms of Expression (Ph.D thesis, University of Stirling, 1984), p. 580. Green is, however, quick to point out that concentrating on differences only and ignoring points of contact is equally unhealthy for it ties one to the phenomenal world of duality.

57. Quoted from Lipner, "Radhakrishnan on Religion and Religions", p. 128.

58. See Collected Works Vol XVII pp. 54-55.

59. Gurmat Siddhant Vol.V p. 1.
60. See Eastern Religion and Western Thought, p. 22
61. Gurmat Siddhant Vol.V p. xviii.
62. Gurmat Siddhant Vol V p. xlvii.
63. For details of such an argument see K. H. Jones, "A philosophical analysis of mystical utterances", in Philosophy East and West 29 (1979), p. 256.
64. A good illustration would be telling another person of an episode of intense fear. There will be understanding on the part of the listener, but the fear and its qualities of feeling will not have been transmitted to that person.
65. Davies points out that this problem is not peculiar to mystical experiences alone. She quotes being in love as an example of an incommunicable experience. But this is an awkward example. Being in love is an emotional experience of the empirical self and does not possess any mystical qualities. The opposite is true for "being in love with God". See C. F. Davies, The Evidential Force of Religious Experience (Oxford, 1989), p. 16.
66. See Jones, "A philosophical analysis of mystical utterances", p. 257 for the formulation of such an argument.
67. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 40.
68. This inference does not, of course proceed on the absurd principle that experience must somehow have the characteristics of its contents. As Appelby cynically maintains, an encounter with a long-haired dog does not itself have to be furry and canine. See P.C. Appelby, "Mysticism and Ineffability", in International Journal of Philosophy of Religion 11 (1980), pp. 145-146.
69. Such claims have also been made by Radhakrishnan. He differentiates between *aparokṣa* (self-validating intuitional experience) as opposed to *pratyakṣa* (knowledge presented to the senses).
70. Gurmat Siddhant Vol.V p. xcvi.
71. This point is made by Staal, Exploring Mysticism, pp. 88-89 and 158-159.
72. Jones, "Experience and Conceptualization in Mystical Experience", p. 163 shares the same view.
73. See Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 22.
74. Collected Works Vol. XV p. 127.

75. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. lxxxix.

76. Gurmat Siddhānt Vol. V p. xxxix.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

It could be said that it is within the Sant tradition that the Rādhāsoāmī movement operates. It is Sant mystic philosophy that provides the Rādhāsoāmī faith with much of its doctrinal content. Bābā Sawan Singh is a representative of a school of thought, perceived by many to be a twentieth century manifestation of the medieval Sant tradition. It is therefore not incorrect to say that the teachings contained in the Gurmat Siddhānt fall under the category Sant Mat.

Although orthodox Hinduism and orthodox Islam were the two dominant streams in medieval Indian history, it would certainly be incorrect to maintain that they were the only ones. There were several others and of these a number were of particular importance. There was first the tradition of Vaisnava bhakti which had spread to Northern India from the south. The medieval bhakti movement came into being as a reaction to Śaṅkara's Vedantism - a theory found by many to be too complicated and philosophical. The common man found bhakti devotionism more sympathetic as the heavy emphasis on devotion to a personal deity appealed to him. Then there was the tradition of Tāntric yoga practiced in Northern India during this period by the numerous adherents of the Nāth sect of yogīs. Thirdly, we find the Muslim Sūfīs numerically far fewer than the adherents of orthodox Islam but exercising a considerable influence on the religious thought

prevailing at the time, evident in the deepening interaction between Hindu mystic traditions and Sufism.

within each of these religious groupings there was a recognisable continuity but none of them could be viewed as completely isolated. All were to some extent influenced by one or more of the others and underwent corresponding modifications. In one significant case this reciprocal exchange issued not simply in the modification of an existing tradition but in the emergence of a recognizable synthesis, a new pattern which in various respects strongly resembled other existing patterns but in its wholeness corresponded to none of them. This was the Sant movement of Northern India. It is the belief system of the Sants that Bābā Sawan Singh presents and interpretes in the Gurmat Siddhānt.

This study presented an exposition of the teachings of Bābā Sawan Singh in the Gurmat Siddhānt. It explained, interpreted, analyzed and commented on the contents of the Gurmat Siddhānt, otherwise known as The Philosophy of the Masters. The main themes studied were the concept of God, cosmogony and cosmology, the concepts of Satgurū, Surat Śabd Yoga, bhakti, ethics and the "unity of religions" thesis.

It is in the light of the total range of Gurū Nānak and Sikh thought that Bābā Sawan Singh's theological statements are to be understood. His ideas about the nature of God appear to have been based on the Sikh scriptures. His ideas concerning the nature of God, his affirmation of the unity of God are characterized by the same emphasis

given to a monotheistic creator-God as that found in the theology of Gurū Nānak. The emphasis on the attributive qualities of God emerges in the names which Bābā Sawan Singh uses to describe this God. These names point in all cases to the mysteriousness of God. It is accepted in the Gurmat Siddhānt that God is beyond all human categories, far transcending all powers of human expression. It could be said that Bābā Sawan Singh's characteristic expression of God is one that he shares not only with Gurū Nānak but with most nirguṇa Sants.

God is the supreme Lord of the universe, beyond human comprehension yet not beyond the reach of communication with man. God's greatness, it is proposed, lies in His being experiencable as part of man's inner being. This belief concerning the immanence of God in the human heart is of primary significance for it points to the possibility of communication existing between man and God. The idea that the indwelling God should speak to man represents a belief inherited from the Sants. There have been earlier Sants who have arrived at similar conclusions concerning the medium of divine communication. It is, however, to Gurū Nānak that Bābā Sawan Singh turns to when he answers the question of how God communicates with man. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the concepts related to divine self-expression, are Śabd, Nām, Hukām and Bhānā. Both Gurū Nānak and Bābā Sawan Singh see Sabd and Nām as bearing a basic identity. They are in reality two different aspects of a single embracing concept. Both are used to expound the nature, content and method of divine communication. Bābā Sawan Singh does not stop at stating that Śabd and Nām are the divine Names. He echoes

Gurū Nānak when he includes Hukām and Bhāṇā in the sum total of God's divine qualities.

Bābā Sawan Singh's interpretation of Rādhāsoāmī cosmogony and cosmology is based predominantly on Kabīr-panthī texts and the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī. The terminology he uses is that of the Nāths, Kabīr-panthīs and Shiv Dayāl Singh. What little appears in the Gurmat Siddhānt on cosmogony and cosmology is essentially an interpretation and a commentary of what has been written in the Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī.

It could be said that the cosmology of the Gurmat Siddhānt presents a highly distinctive world-view. Bābā Sawan Singh's assertions about the nature of the universe are meant to be appreciated within a very distinctive context, outside of which it has little meaning. There are two particularly noticable features of the Beas version of the Rādhāsoāmī cosmic scheme.

The first involves the imagery underlying it which is not mechanical but somewhat hydraulic. God is no distant, detached creator. The cosmos originated in, and is sustained by a cosmic current emanating from the supreme Being. By this current, the creator divided from Himself, flowed ever downwards, halting and forming cosmic zones at each of the levels of the universe.

The second involves the Beas version of the cosmic map. At Beas the topmost region of the Agra scheme, namely Rādhāsoāmī Dhām is not viewed as having any special status as the highest cosmic region.

According to the Beas view, Rādhāsoāmī Dhām is merely another name for Anāmī Lok, which is one of the four pure spiritual cosmic realms. The playing down of the name "Rādhāsoāmī" at Beas is indicative of the prevailing belief there that the name has no special significance. At Beas it is argued that Shiv Dayāl Singh did not view the single name "Rādhāsoāmī" as being special. Instead it is claimed that he talked of the five Names, seen at Beas as being keys of access to the five regions above the physical plane. This view is strongly contested at Agra.

Bābā Sawan Singh's mystic philosophy revolves around the philosophy of spiritual salvation which emphasizes the central role of the Satgurū. The relationship between the Satgurū and the disciple is the beginning and the end of all Rādhāsoāmī teachings. Salvation is seen as being possible only by entering into such a relationship, and salvation achieved through such a relationship is, in theory, the sole aim of the disciple. All else, is subordinate to this fundamental goal. As the sole available source of spiritual power and object of personal devotion the Satgurū is the seat of a great religious mystery.

The traditional Tāntric emphasis on the indispensability of the Satgurū culminates in the gurūvāda doctrine. This doctrine which presents the Satgurū as the embodiment of divine power and the sole agent of spiritual salvation is reflected in almost everything Bābā Sawan Singh has to say about the Satgurū.

In the Gurmat Siddhant the Satgurū is undoubtedly the centre of the whole. He is conceived of not only as the only source of revelation but also as the essential means of salvation. He is portrayed with a fervor of religiousity and is deemed to be the human embodiment of the supreme Being. The very existence of the Satgurū, is in Bābā Sawan Singh's view a rare and infinitely blessed opportunity. He believes that it is only through the Satgurū that a spiritually meaningful relationship with God can be formed.

In the Gurmat Siddhant the Satgurū enjoys the status of a Godman. He is often featured as the human pole of God, and as part of the divine plan of things is beyond question. There is a tendency to think of the Satgurū as the inner voice, that mystical movement of God in the inner depths of the human soul. The Satgurū is the mouthpiece of God. He is the refulgent light of the infinite higher self. There is repeated talk of God-into-Expression as the holy Word of Life. In short, we are presented with the idea of the "perfect man", that "gem of humanity", the greatest and highest of mankind. The Satgurū is the divine force that comes into the world to share God's light, love and His secret of secrets.

At the very heart of Surat Śabd Yoga, which is basically a Sant variant of Nāth Tāntric yoga, lies the question of identity. In the Gurmat Siddhant we are told that the beings of this world suffer from a case of mistaken identity, for we are not the persons we think ourselves to be. According to Rādhāsoāmī teachings, the true self of the person, which is the soul, lies completely hidden under a layer of

mind and body. Innumerable births ago the soul became separated from its lofty source and descended to begin a career of transmigration in the material world. This is our predicament. The object of Surat Śabd Yoga is to foster an awareness in us of our true situation and to provide the means for us to recover our true identities by transcending body consciousness and escaping from the clutches of the mind.

Instrumental to an understanding of Surat Śabd Yoga is the recognition of the fact that unlike Nāth yoga and other related traditions, Surat Śabd Yoga does not advocate breath control or physical postures as part of its practice. Rather it is concerned with transcending the corporeal frame and its limitations altogether via the activation and cultivation of the sensory current or soul force. We are evidently dealing here with a form of yoga which defines religion as an exclusively inner experience dominated by the idea of spiritual ascent.

In the psychology of Surat Śabd Yoga the further down one's consciousness descends the deeper the state of unconsciousness. The further up it ascends the higher the awareness or superconsciousness. The pattern is quite clear. Clarity increases steadily the more one ascends. The spectrum of consciousness has a definite hierarchical structure specific to Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology, with the higher orders subsuming and transcending their lower counterparts.

The idea of the soul's ascent is fully embedded in the imagery of flow so fundamental to Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology. Normally the embodied soul is seen as flowing downward into the temporal world. But this flowing and wasting can be reversed and pulled upward to the third eye. Here the soul can merge with the celestial sound current that flows downward from God. Having attached itself unto this sensory current, the soul begins to ascend. It is this idea of the soul merging with Śabd that gives Surat Śabd Yoga its name and makes it the unique yogic discipline that it is.

The essential features of bhakti in the Gurnat Siddhant are best understood in the broader context of Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of devotional mysticism. This can best be achieved by analyzing the relationship between bhakti and God-realization.

Bābā Sawan Singh's understanding of bhakti as a process of God-centred devotional contemplation governs what he perceives to be the relationship between spiritual knowledge and devotion. He equates bhakti with the intuitive, direct experience of the supreme Being. The dwelling of God in the heart involves a certain realization of His true nature. This involves continuously meditating on the very essence of God's being, constantly recollecting His divine character in the spirit of loving contemplation. Bābā Sawan Singh agrees with Rāmānuja that bhakti must involve the direct perception of the Divine. Both argue that such an unmediated apprehension would be meaningless if not accompanied by loving devotion and complete self-abandonment. It is argued that it is God that allows the devotee to enter into a

loving relationship with Him. God is here the original cause and it is from His function as supreme consciousness that all souls spring forth and are eternally linked with Him.

Devotion is also viewed as a spiritual form. Nām yoga is viewed as a crucial factor in the spiritual development of the devotee. It is through the yogic discipline that the devotee has to master the lower self enroute to spiritual illumination. Like Gurū Nānak, Bābā Sawan Singh stresses the role of the Satgurū who is the ultimate quality of love, inherent in man and permeating the entire universe. It is the Satgurū who is the transmitter of the joy of love and who is the constant reminder that love is the eternal quality of the Absolute.

It is through attachment and selfless surrender to the will of the Satgurū that the devotee is linked to God. Devotion is a state in which the devotee listens to the Śabd, is filled with fear of God, meditates on Him and feels His presence everywhere. The final state of attachment is when the devotee hears the Śabd within, detaches himself completely from the cosmic illusion and achieves divine communion and is absorbed in the ocean of divine bliss.

In the Gurmat Siddhant bhakti represents a certain relational view of reality. Bābā Sawan Singh seeks to establish that it is imperative that the devotee finds himself in a serving and subservient relationship to God via the Satgurū. Bhakti therefore denotes a relationship of inseparability between the devotee and the Satgurū.

Here we find a central theme of Sant mysticism, namely that of the unidimensionality of God and the Satgurū being reemphasized. The Satgurū is the embodiment of Nām through which God reveals His true nature.

Bābā Sawan Singh also sees bhakti as the basis for human action. In general his views on the matter correspond to those found in the Bhagavad Gītā. In the Bhagavad Gītā bhakti is considered to be the determining perspective, more fundamental to existence than either knowledge or action. Bābā Sawan Singh also promulgates the view that it is desireless action which promotes true devotion.

True devotion which must be the hallmark of the relationship between God and the devotee is understood in the context of the devotee becoming aware of the infinitude and majesty of the Satgurū. The devotee must learn to love the Satgurū and take refuge at his feet. It is the Satgurū who is the universal shelter and the revelation of God in the heart of the devotee. It is this loving adoration for the Satgurū that transforms the relationship between devotee and Satgurū from one of differentiated separation to one of personal union. It is at this point that diversity melts into the absolute of the Universal.

The belief in man's essential unity with God is the keystone of the mystic philosophy of the Gurmat Siddhānt. If man feels himself sundered or alienated from God, such a feeling is illusory. In order for man to perceive his true nature there must be a constant striving on his part to re-unite himself with God. In the Gurmat Siddhānt

ethical living is seen as part of the spiritual quest. Positive self-transformation figures prominently as a key ingredient of rightful living. Self-transformation is defined as a conscious movement in the direction of a God-centred life.

It is through the concept of dharma which is basic to the fundamental structure of Hindu ethics that Bābā Sawan Singh expounds his system of ethical behaviour. He conceives of dharma as being the indicative of the ontological foundation of morality. This ontological dimension of dharma is expressed by the Sanskrit root *dhṛ* which denotes that which sustains the universe. It indicates the cosmic order which imposes upon the duty bound individual a set of universal norms or principles. The moral thrust of the concept of dharma can be viewed as being suggestive of the fact that for Bābā Sawan Singh morality is woven into the very structure of reality.

Bābā Sawan Singh's code of moral behaviour is modelled primarily on the ethical implications of Gurū Nānak's theology. It also does contain some elements that appear in the Sikh Rahit Maryādā. It has been suggested that his idea of ethical living does carry with it some important philosophical implications. In truthfulness for example, he sees the leading of a life in the light of God's essence, for God is truth. There can be no moral order so long as the truth is not upheld. It is held that in the existence of the moral order lies the very essence of truth. The logical extension of this is that there can be no meaningful living without the precept of truthfulness. Compassion is interpreted in the light of the belief that it is that which God

wishes to be realized since it is one of His divine qualities. Compassion here means love, forgiveness and goodwill. This in turn presupposes the ability to overcome the need to injure in word, thought and deed. It is also argued that where there is pride there can be no humility, without which true submission to the divine will is rendered impossible. There is also the need for inner purification. The spiritual significance of cleanliness is based on the dictum that cleanliness is next to godliness. Contentment and continent feature as two virtues which are centred on the idea of self-control. Without an attitude of constancy and desirelessness there can be no sensible social life. Finally it can also be said of Bābā Sawan Singh that the principles of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man find their practical every day expression in the practice of social service.

From our discussion of the "unity of religions" thesis in the Gurmat Siddhānt it emerged that there exists a "dialogue of tension" between

the essentialist and the contextualist. We saw it being argued that if there was one mystical reality to which the experience of all religious traditions refer, it had to be accepted as a tenet of faith for no firm philosophical conclusions could be made about it. The question here is that can such misgivings provide us with any useful insights? Does the phenomenologist approach to mystical reality bring us any closer to understanding what Bābā Sawan Singh has said about the core of religion?

There are many ways of answering this question, depending on where one's sentiments lie. We choose to reflect on Bābā Sawan Singh's essentialism in a manner sympathetic to the primordialist position. Our central premise is that Bābā Sawan Singh's statements regarding the transcendental unity of religions are based on mystical experience. Mystical experience involves seeing things in a manner which is to a large extent free from interpretation of our usual concepts, categories and distinctions by which we order and interpret the universe. We agree with Bābā Sawan Singh that the contextualist cannot really understand the true nature of the esoteric oneness of religion because he operates with different categories of reality, different types of intelligibility which are not suitable instruments for apprehending the mystical.

Bābā Sawan Singh is a mystic. His experience of the fundamental unity of religious truth is consciously realized, not intellectually reasoned. A closer examination of mystical experience suggests to us that the universe is full of other realms of being determined by other laws. There exist other laws from which the phenomenologist is blinded for he is unwilling to question and put in abeyance the basic premises, first principles and dogmas with which he operates. The basis of contextualist thinking is materialistic. Scientific materialism cannot accomodate the other realms of being in our universe unless it steps out of the world of logical and phenomenological analysis.

The contextualist has become submerged by his own creations - a result of the fascination he nurtures for scientific phenomena and the erroneous conclusions he draws as from them. He fails to realize that the mystical is situated on quite a different plane which he cannot or will not see. The contextualist argues phenomenologically in order to justify his attachment to the world and appearance and to his ego and his consequent flight from the presence of the Absolute.

The contextualist's criticisms levelled at Bābā Sawan Singh's idea of religious unity tend to explain mystical experience by means of standards of rationality exterior or alien to the mystical consciousness of a mystic like the author of the Gurnat Siddhānt. Bābā Sawan Singh argues and we agree, that to experience something gives us a deeper and more convincing, more lasting knowledge of it than mere rational comprehension can. Where experience is used as a basis for metaphysical inferences, it is obvious that such inferences cannot be proved within a philosophical framework different to that of the mystic in question. Mystical experience does not depend for its meaning on any external criteria. It finds expression through its own fully coherent symbolic language. Any attempt to translate the vocabulary of the mystic into another "language" or mode of thought and thus to attempt to refute or justify mystics' claims will be futile. It will inevitably mean that we have to risk losing some of the essential significance or depth of the experience portrayed in its own language.

The type of approach which looks at mystics' claims from the outside and attempts to analyze them by means of logic, sees them as something uncertain from which rational argument is unable to derive any "proof" for the existence of metaphysical realities. The mystic, on the other hand, knows the presence of a particular mystical reality as an immediately apprehended certainty. In the Gurmat Siddhant it has been repeatedly affirmed that illumination is the key to knowing, that the true experience of reality is intuitive, not the use of logical thought. Reason, it is stated is outside its province when used as a means for knowing in spiritual matters. Intellectual concepts must continually be tested by vision. Reason is useful on the mental level but reason must be accompanied by inner vision. Otherwise it is little more than ignorance. What is required here is a kind of knowledge of the Essence achieved through contemplative realization of the nature of Truth.

From Bābā Sawan Singh we learn that if there is to be interaction between man and the transcendent, then there must be a path for man that he can follow in order to approach the transcendent. Scholarly disciplines usually do not provide for such a venture. Research into the claims of mystics should be accompanied by a willingness on the part of the researcher to experience the mystical path first hand. This will enable him to experience first hand insights into mystical realms. It can be safely assumed that scholars that adopt this proposition probably represent an insignificant lot.

The Rādhāsoāmī movement proclaims itself to be a manifestation of Sant Mat. The teachings found in the Gurmat Siddhānt represent a repetition of those proclaimed by the medieval Sants. It honors their memories. The major contours of philosophy and style that unite the major Sant figures are distilled and presented in a simplistic form by Bābā Sawan Singh. In our study of the Gurmat Siddhānt it was shown that Bābā Sawan Singh's primary concern is to illustrate and explain the teachings of the Sants in a particular format. There is no evidence to suggest that Bābā Sawan Singh departs fundamentally from the Sant sources quoted. All the Gurmat Siddhānt sets out to do is to present a loose collection of Sant tenets that have been explained and commented upon by Bābā Sawan Singh. The emphasis throughout is on their esoteric content. There can be no doubt that the Gurmat Siddhānt is cast within the pattern of Sant beliefs. The essential characteristics of Sant philosophy have been replicated. These have developed out of a combination of a variety of concepts and beliefs that stretch across two main religio-philosophical boundaries, namely Vaisnava bhakti and Nāth Tāntrism.

The Sants worshipped a monotheistic God. His manifestation was through His immanence in His creation. In particular He manifested Himself through His indwelling in the human heart. It was there that God revealed Himself. Man's proper response to this revelation was a loving devotion expressed through contemplation on the divine Name. There are many elements in Bābā Sawan Singh's thought that have affinity used by Sants like Gurū Nānak. In Gurū Nānak's teachings we find an emphasis upon the unity of God, the divine attributes, the

divine self-expression, a doctrine of the divine will and an emphasis upon suffering involved in separation from the Beloved.

In Sant thought the inward way to God was open to all who were willing to tread the inspiring yet difficult spiritual path. Great importance was attached to the Satgurū who achieved divine status and was often conceived of as the inner voice of God. There was the belief that the sole meaningful movement in the direction of spiritual emancipation was unthinkable without the guidance of a living spiritual preceptor. As in Tantrism it was the Satgurū who held the key to the inner mysteries of mystical reality and it was he who represented the zenith of spiritual purity and perfection. Bābā Sawan Singh's ideas regarding the Satguru reflect these convictions.

Traces of Nāth influence only assumed a significant role during the time of Kabīr. The basis of Kabīr's beliefs was Nāth Tantric yoga. There is much evidence of Hatha yoga thought structures and terminology in the works of this Sant. Nāth influences also emerge later in the terminology used by Gurū Nānak. This is reflected mainly in his uncompromising rejection of all exterior forms of worship and an emphasis on the inner path to mystical communion. When one looks at the manner in which Bābā Sawan Singh looks upon Surat Śabd Yoga as the inner science of the soul, it becomes apparent where this idea was borrowed from.

For the Sants, as for their Vaisnava counterparts, the necessary religious response was love. In several respects, however, the Sants

did not adhere to some of the tenets of traditional bhakti. Some of these differences were of a fundamental nature. They did not offer their love to any incarnation. It was instead directed to the supreme God Himself. Their expression of this love was through an exclusively inward meditation and devotion. Their path of love was one accompanied by pangs of anguish brought upon by an incessant longing for God. It was very different from the easy path of traditional bhakti.

The Philosophy of the Masters draws heavily on the Ādi Granth and the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, especially Gurū Nānak. This is understandable, if not predictable when one notes that Bābā Sawan Singh grew up in a predominantly Sikh environment and has retained Sikh customs. His philosophical orientation is dictated by his relationship to the Ādi Granth which he perceives as a storehouse of spiritual truths reflecting the mystic philosophy of Sant Mat. Although one of the principal figures of the Rādhāsōmī tradition, Bābā Sawan Singh does not see any justification in the claim that the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh are unique and therefore separate from those of his Sant predecessors. For him there can be no doubt that Shiv Dayāl Singh is a modern day Sant. In true Beas spirit Bābā Sawan Singh has been known to propose that the Sār Bachan Rādhāsōmī is just one more addition to the common body of Sant writings or Sant bani. Bābā Sawan Singh does not see Rādhāsōmī Mat and Sant Mat as two separate entities. In his view they are synonymous with one another.

This study has endeavoured to throw some light on the doctrines of one of the principal Satgurūs of the Puñjāb wing of the Rādhāsoāmī movement. It studied in detail one of the major statements about Sant Mat by the second Satgurū of the Beas branch of the Rādhāsoāmīs. It highlighted and commented upon the principal tenets of Bābā Sawan Singh's mystic philosophy. It detailed the manner in which the esoteric interpretation of Sant teachings emerged in the Curmat Siddhānt. This is, to our knowledge, the first time that the teachings of Bābā Sawan Singh have been examined in a scholarly fashion.

There is, however, still a lot more to be done. Research into the entire philosophical foundation of the Rādhāsoāmī faith is still sadly lacking. Apart from a few socio-anthropological and historical surveys, of the Agra wing of the movement, scholarly interest in the Rādhāsoāmī form of Sant Mat remains woefully limited. Its historical and doctrinal links with the medieval Sant movement have yet to be seriously studied in greater depth than previously done before. Pressing questions regarding the neo-Sant identity of the Rādhāsoāmī faith require to be defined and refined. The question of what can be said about the Rādhāsoāmī's claim to have revived the Sant tradition still remains to be attended to. This study, we hope, has contributed to Rādhāsoāmī scholarship in a manner that will make answering the above question a little easier.

GLOSSARY

This glossary embraces most of the foreign terms used in the study. Those terms that do not appear here would have been explained either in the text or notes.

- abhang: Short lyric composed in the Marathi language, similar to the North Indian pad.
- ācārya: Teacher of the Vedas. Spiritual guide who performs initiation.
- Ādi Granth: "The first book", i.e., the Sikh holy scripture compiled by Gurū Arjan. The Ādi Granth consists of Gurū Arjan's own compositions as well as those of the preceeding Sikh Gurūs. It also contains compositions and selected hymns of some bhagats or Sants. The Ādi Granth is also called the Gurū Granth Sahib.
- Ādigurū: The primal gurū, the supreme gurū. For the medieval Sants, Jñānesvar is sometimes looked upon at the Ādigurū. In the Rādhāsoāmī movement, it is Rāmānand.
- Advaita: A philosophical term for undifferentiated oneness of being. One of the philosophies of the Vedantic system of thought, (Advaita Vedānta).
- Agam Purus: The unapproachable or inaccessible One. In Rādhāsoāmī cosmological thought the term refers to the ruling deity of Agam Lok, the second highest spiritual realm, or the seventh cosmic zone above the physical world.
- Agra doctrine: The incarnationist school of thought within the Rādhāsoāmī movement. The founder of the Agra line, Rāi Sālig Rām propounded the theory that each succeeding Satgurū was the incarnated presence of his predecessor.
- ahankāra: A Sāṅkhyan term meaning ego sense, principle of individuality and egoistic limitations. The individual sense of "I-ness".

ahimsā:	"Non-violence", by body, speech and mind and the general attitude of welfare for all things living. It is one of the yamas (observances) of the discipline of yoga.
ajapājapa:	The Tāntric practice of the silent, internal repetition of the divine Name or gurmaṇtra. The Sants talk of the "unuttered prayer".
Akāl:	Timeless, beyond birth and death. One of the attributes of God mentioned in the Sikh scriptures.
Akāl Puruṣ:	In Rādhāsoāmī terminology, Akāl Puruṣ is the ruling deity of the spiritual region called Alak Lok, Sat Lok or Sach Khaṇḍ.
Akeh:	"Beyond description". A term used in the Sikh scriptures to describe the Lord.
Alakh:	Indescribable.
Alakh Puruṣ:	The indescribable Lord of what is known in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition as Alakh Lok, the invisible or indescribable realm of the spirit.
Alakh Nirānjan:	The Rādhāsoāmī name for the ruling deity of the first spiritual realm above the causal plane.
amrit: (amṛta)	Adjective meaning immortal or imperishable. In the Sikh scriptures it refers namely to the nectar of immortality, i.e. the divine self-expression. In Rādhāsoāmī literature the term is used to describe the presence, teachings and blessings of the Satgurū.
amrit velā:	In Rādhāsoāmī parlance the term refers to the ambrosial hour, i.e. most suited for meditation. The times given usually refer to the early hours of dawn and dusk.
anāhata śabda: (Anhad Śabd)	The mystical sound or "unstruck melody" which is heard at the climax of the Haṭha yoga process. The Sants speak of the unstruck Śabd. It refers to the Word that emanates continuously from the

supreme Being, permeates the entire universe and is present in everyone.

Anāmi: Nameless.

Anāmi Purus: The Nameless, the Absolute. A Rādhāsoāmī term denoting the highest deity, ruler of the highest cosmic region, Anāmi Lok.

And: The causal plane. Also known in Rādhāsoāmī circles as Sahasral Kañwal (literally, the thousand petalled lotus). This region is called so because from it is said to emanate the radiance of one thousand unimaginably beautiful lights.

andaj: A name for all life forms that come from eggs, like birds and serpents. It is a name often used in Rādhāsoāmī literature.

Angaminkarma: A term that appears in the writings of Śāṅkara. It refers to karmic residues resulting from acts during one's lifetime. Its other name is Sanciyaṁakarma. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the term used is Kriyāman-karma.

anicca: The Buddhist doctrine of temporal impermanence of the world.

Apabhraṁśa: The collective name for the middle Indo-Aryan dialects which evolved from the various forms of prakṛit (common dialects) between the sixth and tenth centuries.

Artha: Wealth, value, possession and power, i.e., the objects of worldly activity. One of the puruṣārthas or human goals.

Asana: In Rāja yoga the term signifies any comfortable posture for meditation. In Haṭha yoga it refers specific, often complicated yogic exercises.

Āśrama: In the Hindu tradition, a retreat for the cultivation of spiritual life. Also refers to one of the four traditional stages of life.

Aṣṭāṅga yoga:	The so-called eight limbed yoga. Also called yoga of the eight parts the chief being prāṇāyama (breathing exercises and āsana (yogic postures).
Ātman:	A term in the <u>Upaniṣads</u> for the Self or inner essence of the universe. In Rādhāsoāmī literature there is the supreme Spirit, the "over-soul" of all.
avatār:	Earthly "descent", incarnation of a deity, usually Viṣṇu. Traditionally there are ten such avatārās: matsya (the fish), kūrma (the tortoise), varāha (the boar), narasiṃha (the man-lion), vāmana (the dwarf), Parāsurāma (Rāmā with the axe), Rāmā, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalkī at the end of time.
avidyā:	Ignorance, absence of true and liberating knowledge. Avidyā is often identified with māyā, the cause of illusion and delusion.
Bābā:	Literally it means father. It is an honorific title applied to holy men like saints, faqirs etc.
bachan:	The word for discourse, discussion, instruction, order or command. The collected discourses of Shiv Dayāl Singh, the founder of the Rādhāsoāmī tradition appear as <u>Sār Bachan Rādhāsoāmī</u> (Principal Discourses of Rādhāsoāmī)
bānī (vānī):	A term means speech. It is also used to refer to the utterances of the Sikh Gurūs and bhagats recorded in the <u>Adi Granth</u> . In Rādhāsoāmī literature Bānī is identified with the audible life stream (i.e. divine self-expression) or Sabd.
Banknāl:	Literally, crooked tunnel. In Rādhāsoāmī cosmological thought it refers to the path through which the soul passes when ascending from the astral to the causal plane.
Basant panchmī:	The name given to the celebration that takes place on the fifth day of the waxing half of the lunar moon of māgh (January-February).

- Beas perspective: The non-incarnationalist Neo-Sant view advocated by the Beas line of the Rādhāsoāmī movement founded by Jaimal Singh and later propagated by Bābā Sawan Singh. The main belief involved is that each Sat-guru is a separate individual in his own right.
- bhagat: An exponent of bhakti, especially one with a particular reputation for piety and spiritual wisdom. It is often used interchangeably with the term Sant.
- bhajan: A sacred chant or devotional song. In Surat Śabd Yoga the word refers to "sound meditation" or the practice of listening to the inner cosmic sounds believed to emanate from the higher cosmic universes.
- bhakti: The philosophy and practice of loving devotion and total surrender to God.
- bhakti marg: The path of love and devotion. One of the three classical Hindu paths, the others being karma marg (the path of action) and jñāna marg (the path of knowledge).
- bhakti yoga: The yoga of loving devotion of God. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat there is a special emphasis on the love for the Satgurū.
- bhānā: The Sikh term for the divine will.
- Bhanwar Guphā: The literal meaning of this Nāth term is rotating cave. In Rādhāsoāmī cosmology it is the name of the causal plane.
- bhāva: Emotional state, devotional attitude.
- bireh: A Puñjābī term meaning the pain of separation and intense longing of one who has been separated from his beloved (i. e. God) The concept is derived from the Sanskrit viraha and is related to the Sūfī concept of ishq.
- brahmacarya: Celibacy. The first of the four āśramas, the other three being grhastha (householder stage, vānaprashta (hermit stage) and sannyāsa (wandering monk stage).

Brahm:	God, the supreme spirit. In Rādhāsoāmī terminology Brahm is the ruler of the causal plane and is identified with Kāl Puruṣ.
Brahmā:	The creator God. he is part of the Hindu trinity with Viṣṇu and Śiva. From the viewpoint of Rādhāsoāmī Mat Brahmā is the creator of the physical world.
Brahmāṇḍ:	Literally, the egg of Brahma. In Rādhāsoāmī cosmological terms, it is another name for the causal plane, the cosmic realm over which Brahm (not Brahma) has jurisdiction. Sometimes the term is used collectively to denote both the astral and causal planes.
brahm gyani:	One who possesses divine wisdom.
cakra:	Literally it means disc or wheel. In Hatha yoga theory, cakras are "lotuses" spaced along the spinal chord which release psychic energy as they are pierced by the ascending kuṇḍalinī.
charan amrit: (amṛta)	In Sikhism it is the baptism with water in which the Gurū's toe has been dipped.
charan kamal:	In the <u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> it means the perfect lotus feet of the Satgurū.
citta:	Sāṃkhyan term meaning the mind as the organ of thought.
Dādū-panthī:	Followers of the teachings of the medieval Sant by name of Dādū.
darśan:	Literally the term means "to see" (an auspicious sight). In the Hindu religious context it refers to the sight of a deity, saint or august personage. In Rādhāsoāmī circles there is talk of receiving darśan ("drinking the glances") of a Satgurū by gaze fixation. The term is also used for the six systems of Brāhmanical philosophy.

Daswan Dwār:
(dasam duār)
(dasama dvāra)

The name possesses the literally meaning of tenth door. In Hatha yoga theory it is the mystical orifice that gives access to transcendental consciousness. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it is the name for the buffer zone between the causal plane and Bhanwar Guphā.

daswand:

The Sikh system of tithe collection begun by Gurū Amar Das. The Sikh was expected to donate one-tenth of his income to the service of the Panth. The collection no longer exists in its original form and is now in the form of a voluntary contribution.

dayā:

Mercy or grace. In Rādhāsoāmī literature the term mehr is also used.

dayā dr̥ṣṭi:

Generally speaking dr̥ṣṭi means view or vision, hence opinion or point of view. It is a Rādhāsoāmī term for the "glance of compassion" of the Satgurū.

Dayāl:

Merciful, the merciful One, the true God. The term appears in Rādhāsoāmī cosmology as the ruler of the spiritual planes:

Dayāl Deś:

It means region of the Merciful in Rādhāsoāmī parlance. It is used to denote the pure spiritual region known also as Sat Deś.

dhār:

In Rādhāsoāmī use it means the cosmic current emanating from the supreme Being.

dhāraṇā:

This is the yogic term for mental fixation on the object of contemplation during meditation.

dharmā:

The cosmic order, right duty, religious law or social and religious observances. It is one of the four goals of life (puruṣārtha), the other three being ārtha (wealth), kāma (lust) and mokṣa (liberation).

dharmśāl:

In early Sikh usage it meant the abode of righteousness or a room or building used for devotional purposes, i.e. gurdwārā. It is probably derived from dharamśāla or dharmasāla

meaning a place of worship for pilgrims or travellers. In the Gurmat Siddhānt it refers to the world in which good acts are to be performed.

Dharam Rai:

The Lord of death. It is the name used in Rādhāsoāmī writings for the God of the dead who is the divine arbiter of the fate of each individual. He is also called Yama.

Dhun:

The celestial sound melody emanating from the supreme Being. It is called the heavenly music in Rādhāsoāmī literature. It is synonymous with Sabd. In the Gurmat Siddhānt the term is also used to denote the discipline of sound meditation.

dhundukhar:

A Rādhāsoāmī term for the state of pre-creational darkness.

Dhuniatmak Nām:

In Rādhāsoāmī parlance, the inexpressible primal sound which cannot be spoken or written nor heard with the physical ears. It is another name for Nām or Sabd.

Dhyān:

The term is derived from dhyāna (attention or concentration) as in the Patañjali Yoga Sūtras. In Surat Sabd Yoga it is the discipline of "seeing the radiant form of the Satgurū within".

derā:

Encampment or dwelling place of a Sikh Sant. Derā Bābā Jaimal Singh was the founding centre of the Beas branch of the Rādhāsoāmī movement.

des:

Strictly speaking it means country. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it is used to refer to a cosmic zone of creation.

dīksā:

Initiation. In Tantrism it is the rite in which the initiating gurū "injects" his spiritual force into the initiate's consciousness, thus preparing him for a life of spiritual renewal.

Dīksāgurū:

The initiating gurū.

dohā:	Couplet.
drstī:	Sight, glance or seeing.
ekāgratā:	The yogic discipline of one-pointed concentration during meditation.
Ekankar: (Ek Ōṅkar)	A name in the Sikh scripture denoting the one, supreme, all-inclusive God. The same word is used in the <u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> to express the unity of God. The word Ōṅkar by it self, in Rādhāsoāmī cosmology means the Lord of the causal plane.
gaddī nishīn:	Literally the term means one who sits on the gaddī (seat of spiritual authority). The term refers to a spiritual center with a line of Satgurūs. Most of the principal gaddī nishīns of the Rādhāsoāmī movement can be traced back to the movement's founder Shiv Dayāl Singh.
gaunā puruṣārtha:	The term refers to the sum total of the traditional Hindu goals of life.
guṇas:	In the system of Sāṃkhya it is the name of the three qualities or fundamental constituents of prakṛti (matter). The creation of the world is seen here as the result of the interplay of the three guṇas. These are sattva (harmony), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia, darkness). In Rādhāsoāmī doctrine the three guṇas are personified by Brahm, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively.
Gurbānī:	The Gurūs' utterances, or the contents of the Sikh scriptures. The term is also used esoterically to mean Nām or Sabd.
Gurmat:	Literally, the view of the Gurūs. This term is commonly used in English for Sikhism. Rādhāsoāmī Satgurūs use it in a broader manner to mean the teachings of the Sants.
<u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> :	The title of the five volumed work attributed to Bābā Sawan Singh. It is the principal statement of the Beas line of Rādhāsoāmī Mat.

gurmantra:	The mantra of a particular significance bestowed by a gurū on his discipline during initiation. It means the mantra of the gurū or initiatory mantra.
gurmukh:	Literally it means one whose face is turned towards the gurū, the God-centred devotee. In Rādhāsoāmī circles it refers to the one who has ascended to the upper reaches of the causal plane (Pār Brahm).
gurū:	Spiritual perceptor or master. In Sant terminology it refers more specifically to the Divine manifested in human form. This definition is the one accepted in Rādhāsoāmī doctrine.
gurū ka śabd:	The Gurūs' word, especially that which is recorded in the hymns of the Gurūs contained in the <u>Ādi Granth</u> .
Gurūavatār:	In the Beas school of Rādhāsoāmī Mat the term is used specifically for the living Satgurū as opposed to a past Satgurū or Purātangurū.
gurūbhakti:	Loving devotion to the Satgurū (or God as gurū).
Gurūdev:	In Sikh theology the term refers to gurū-God. In the <u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> it is the radiant form of the inner Satgurū said to appear to some during meditation.
gurūsevā:	Service to the gurū. The term has similar connotations with the term gurūpada sevā.
gurūpades:	The term denoting the teaching of the gurū.
gurūvāda:	The Tantric doctrine of the gurū as spiritual perceptor.
himsā:	Injury by body, mind or deed. The antithesis of ahimsā.

Hatha yoga:	An elaborate system of yoga based on the <u>Hatha-yogapradīpikā</u> . Its main object is the development of physical well-being.
hukām: (hukm)	In Sikh theology, the divine command or will governing the universe. In Rādhāsoāmī doctrine it is associated with Nām or Śabd.
idā:	A yogic term for the ascending tract of the autonomic nervous system.
indriya:	An organ or instrument of sense comprising the skin, tongue, nose, eyes, ears, hands, generative organs and anus.
īshq:	The Sūfī term for longing for God, resulting from an ardent love for Him.
<u>janam sakhī:</u>	These are hagiographical accounts of the life of the Sikh Gurūs, especially Gurū Nānak.
Jap:	Devout repetition orally or silently of a mantra, sacred words or scriptures.
Japjī:	A fundamental Sikh prayer at the beginning of the <u>Ādi Granth</u> . It was composed by Gurū Nānak and is recited daily by devout Sikhs.
Jeraḥ:	Creation of life from the placenta. Life born of the womb.
jite je marnā:	Its literal meaning is to die when alive. This Punjābī phrase is used in the <u>Gurmāt Siddhānt</u> to mean dying to the world by transcending body consciousness.
jīva:	Living being. The term refers specifically to the soul in its individuality, as distinct from ātman, the universal soul. There are as many jivas as individual beings.
jīvanmukti:	The attainment of release from transmigration while still in the human body.

jīvanmukta:	The highest category of realized person who has reached the goal in this life and thus in the human body.
jñāna:	Knowledge, intuition, wisdom. The term is used to refer to the highest intuitive understanding, the realization of atman. Jñāna is the outcome of meditation or revelation.
Kabīr panth:	Followers of the path of Kabīr. These are members of the community of those observing a distinctive pattern of religious beliefs and practices as taught and practised by Kabīr.
Kāl Puruṣ:	In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it is the name given to the power which controls the physical, astral and causal planes. Kāl Puruṣ is also called Brahm.
Kālīyuga:	The fourth cycle of time, also known as the Dark or Iron Age. It is the age in which we live now.
kām:	The creative power of desire or lust. It is one of the puruṣārthas.
karma:	The destiny or fate of an individual generated in accordance with the deeds performed in his present and past existences. It is the term for deed or action.
Kāyā sādhanā:	The term means the culture of the body. It is a concept referring to physical exercises of yoga.
Khālṣā:	The Sikh order or brotherhood instituted by Gurū Gobind Singh in 1699.
khaṇḍ:	Region or realm.
kirt karnā:	The Sikh moral principle of earning one's living by honest means. It figures prominently in the <u>Rahit Maryādā</u> (Sikh code of ethics).
kīrtan:	Group singing of devotional songs in praise of God. In Surat Sabd Yoga it means listening internally to Sabd.

kleśa:	Pain, affliction arising from metaphysical ignorance of the true nature of reality.
krodh:	The Punjabi term for anger. It is one of the "five evils" in Sikh ethics. The other four are lobh (greed), moh (attachment), and haṅkāṛ (pride).
Kṛṣṇa:	Avatār of Viṣṇu and one of the most important deities in the Hindu pantheon.
Kriyāmankarma:	A term used in the <u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> for actions performed in the present life.
ksamā:	The virtue of patience, forbearance, mercy and compassion.
kundalinī:	The so-called serpent power of the central nervous system (susumnā) which lies latent in the lumbar-spinal region of a human being. When the kundalinī is awakened it activates the cakras thus initiating progressive enlightenment.
laṅgar:	The community kitchen and dining hall attached to gurdwārās where free meals are served.
līlā:	A Purāṇic concept of divine play viewed as God's sport in creating the world.
lobh:	The Punjabi term for greed.
lok: (loka)	A cosmic division of the universe.
Mahā Sunn(a):	Its literal meaning is great vacuum. In Rādhāsoāmī cosmology it refers to the region of intense darkness situated above the causal plane (Sunna) and below the supracausal plane (Bhanwar Guphā).
manas:	Mind in the widest sense, heart, intellect. The term also used for the inner organ as the seat of thinking, understanding, feeling, imagination and will.

nanmukh:	Literally, facing the mind. It refers to the one who obeys the dictates of the mind instead of that of the guru.
mantra:	A sacred formula, a verse phrase, word or syllable of particular religious import.
mantrajapa:	The practice of repeating or remembering a particular mantra.
nansarovar:	The pool of nectar. The holy pool of a gurdwārā.
masānd:	Territorial deputies appointed by the Sikh Gurūs to supervise congregations and collect tithes.
mat:	Doctrine, creed, way or teachings.
mauj:	Whim, delight, pleasure and wave. In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition, the supreme Being's (Rādhāsoāmī) desireless will or pleasure.
māyā:	The Vedantic term for cosmic illusion. It is also used to denote the corruptible and corrupting world.
mehr:	In Rādhāsoāmī parlance it means grace, love, kindness and mercy of the Satgurū.
noksa:	Liberation, absolute freedom, release from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
Mūlmantra: (Mūlmanter)	The basic credal statement with which the <u>Ādi Granth</u> begins.
muni:	An ascetic who practices silence or mauna.
nāda:	Sound, the original vibration in the emanation of the world.
Nāmdhārī:	A sect within the Sikh religion. It started with Bābā Salak Singh (1799-1861) and developed under the leadership of Bābā Ram Singh.

Nām simran:	Remembering the divine Name. It involves the discipline that ranges from a simple of an appropriate word to the devout singing of hymns and sophisticated meditation. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it refers to the constant silent repetition of the gurmanttra.
nāma-rūpa:	Name and form. It is the phenomenal world which constitutes the cycle of birth and rebirth.
Nānak- panthī:	The way or community of Gurū Nanak. The term is also used to denote the followers of Guru Nanak.
Nāth:	A yogic sect of considerable influence during the time of Gurū Nānak. Its origins are not wholly clear. Its development owes much to Saivism and the Sahajayana school of Tantric Buddhism. Nāth also means master and the term Adinath or original Master is used for Siva.
neti neti:	A phrase meaning "not this, not this" (na iti, na iti). It represents the denial of any characterization of the atman in the <u>Upanisads</u> .
nij:	The term is used to denote one, true or proper.
Nij Ansh: (Ans)	In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition it refers to one who shares the same essence as the Lord.
Nirāṅkar:	Literally, without form, a formless and absolute power. It is the designation of the formless One, Akāl Purus.
Niranjan:	It is the name given in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition to the ruler or Lord of the astral plane.
Nirāṅkāri:	A nineteenth century reform movement founded by Dayāl Dās who died in 1855. Their Gurū is called Gurdev Singh. The movement is based in Chandigarh.
nirat:	The "attentive" faculty of the soul as used in Rādhāsoāmī literature. The term has been borrowed

from Nāth literature.

- nirbhai: A word for fearlessness. It is one of the Sikh attributes for God.
- nirguna: Without qualities or attributes.
- nirguna bhakti: Devotion to a formless loving God.
- niyama: Observances performed continually by all serious aspirants of yoga.
- pad: Short lyric, hymn.
- pañch Nam: The five divine Names constituting the gurmanttra of the Beas school of the Rādhāsoāmī tradition.
- pañch Sabd: The five Sabds that are believed to emanate from the five cosmic regions above the causal. These are named as Rādhāsoāmī Lok, Anāmī Lok, Agām Lok, Alakh Lok and Sat Lok (Sach Khand). The term appears frequently in the Gurmat Siddhant.
- panth: The word means path or way and refers to the community of believers of a certain Sant.
- Par Brahm: In Rādhāsoāmī esoteric cosmology it is the name for the upper reaches of the causal plane or Brahmāṇḍ.
- param: The word means supreme. It is often used as a prefix to describe the Satgurū in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. The honorific title is Param Sant Satgurū (Supreme Master Saint).
- paratātma: In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition it is a term used to describe the supreme soul, i.e., a highly evolved person.
- param puruṣārtha: The highest goal in life, i.e., spiritual liberation or mokṣa.

param Sant:	Supreme Sant. In Rādhāsoāmī it refers to the Satgurū who has achieved the highest level of God consciousness.
paramparā:	Spiritual succession or lineage.
Pind:	In the Rādhāsoāmī tradition it is the name of the lowest of the three main levels of creation, i.e. the material universe.
pīṇḍa:	The descending tract of the autonomic nervous system in yoga.
prakṛti:	A Sāṅkhyan term for primary matter.
pralaya:	Cosmic destruction or disintegration which occurs periodically.
prāṇa:	The vital breath or life force. There are five kinds of breath: prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, samāna and udāna.
prāṇāyāma:	The yogic exercise of controlled rhythmical breathing.
prasād:	Divine grace, benevolence, blessing. In Rādhāsoāmī parlance it refers to objects or substances by contact with, or use by a Satgurū.
Prārabdhkarma:	Karmic residues determined at birth and which work themselves out in the present life.
pratyaḥāra:	The yogic practice of withdrawing concentration from objects of sense.
prem(a):	Love.
prema bhakti:	The bhakti of loving devotion.
pūjā:	The Vedic term for worship or adoration.
puruṣa:	In Sāṅkhya the term designates the supreme creative power undefiled and unlimited by contact with prakṛti

or matter. In the Upanisads it denotes the inner man or the spiritual person in man. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat in is the name for the supreme Being (Sat Puruṣ).

Rādhāsoāmī:

In Rādhāsoāmī literature it is the appellation of the supreme Lord. It is also the appellation used for Shiv Dayāl Singh.

Rādhāsoāmī Dhām:

Literally, Abode of Rādhāsoāmī. It is the name of the highest cosmic region and the ultimate home of the soul.

Rādhāsoāmī Mat:

The term means the path of Rādhāsoāmī based primarily on the teachings of Shiv Dayāl Singh.

rajas:

The creative or active attribute of nature. It is one of the three gunas of the Sāṃkhya system. Its characteristic is strength, activity and dispersal of being.

rāg(a):

Musical mode.

Rehit Maryādā:

The code of discipline of the Sikh Khālsā. It (Rehat) is also the title of a specific text on the subject.

ṛṣi:

Seer, sage, It is used in particular when referring to the poet-sages to whom the Vedas was said to have revealed.

rta:

The term means the cosmic and sacred order, the ultimate, and harmonic structure of reality.

Śabd:
(śabda)

Sound, the divine word. In Rādhāsoāmī theology it refers to the divine self-expression manifested as a sound current.

Śabdgurū:

This is the Rādhāsoāmī term for the Satgurū, considered to be the living embodiment of Śabd.

Śabdapūrvayoga:

The yoga of the word.

Sach Khand:

The first purely spiritual plane in Rādhāsoāmī cosmology. Its other name is Sat Des.

sādhū:	Holy man, renunciant, one who has attained spiritual excellence. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat the term has specific connotations. It refers to one who has transcended the astral plane and has achieved the causal plane.
saguṇa:	It means possessing qualities or attributes. The saguṇa aspect of the deity manifests itself as an avatār.
sādhana:	The term for spiritual exercise or discipline. It is used in relation to yoga.
sākhī:	Couplet, brief verse.
śakta surat:	The term carries the meaning companion spirit. In Rādhāsoāmī circles the term is sometimes used for those Satgurūs considered to be companion spirits of Shiv Dayāl Singh.
saṁavarna:	The Hindu doctrine of caste.
saṁādhi:	The resting place for the ashes of a holy person. It is used in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition for the repository of the remains of a departed Satgurū.
saṁpradāya:	Tradition, school of religious thought.
Sāṁkhya:	One of the six traditional schools of Hindu philosophy. It is also the foundation of the yoga system.
saṁsāra:	The phenomenal world of suffering. It is the cycle of temporal existence.
saṁskāra:	Karmic residues. These are the psychic impressions left by previous lives that influence to some extent a person's individual existence.
Saṁcitkarma:	Karmic residues produced by acts performed in previous lives, but which remain dormant in the previous life.

sāṅgat:	This is the term for assembly, religious congregation or holy fellowship.
sannyāsī:	It is used to refer to a renunciant, wandering monk.
Sant:	The term denotes spiritual person, saint, holy man and one who has realized the truth. It is also generally used to denote a member of a devotional tradition which flourished in medieval North India. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat, a Sant is one who has reached the spiritual realm of Sach Khand.
Sant Mat:	The way or doctrine of the Sants. It is also dubbed the science of the soul by many in the Rādhāsoāmī tradition. Sometimes the Rādhāsoāmī faith is equated with Sant Mat by proponents of the Beas school.
Sant paramparā:	A spiritual lineage of Sants.
Sant Satgurū:	In Rādhāsoāmī parlance it is the designation reserved for all Satgurūs who are believed to have "descended" from Sach Khand.
santosa:	The virtue associated with continence, patience (santokh) and contentment.
saran:	A bhakti term meaning total surrender to God in loving devotion.
Sat Lok:	A synonym for Sach Khand, the first purely spiritual region.
Sat Purus:	The Lord of Sat Lok or Sach Khand.
Satgurū:	The true gurū. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it is the title of the gurū who has transcended to Sach Khand.
Sat Nām:	The True Name. It is also an appellation of Sat Purus.

sattva:	One of the three guṇas. Its characteristics are purity and goodness. It is one of the three fundamental qualities in the Sāṃkhya system.
satsang:	The fellowship of true believers, (literally, association of then truthful). It is also the name of spiritual center of the Rādhāsoāmī faith.
satsang ghar:	Meditation hall.
satsangī:	One who has been initiated by a Satgurū and lives according to the rules of the Rādhāsoāmī faith.
satya vacan(a):	The Sikh principle of truthfulness.
Setaj:	Life forms born of moisture (reptiles).
sevā:	Service. An act of selfless service usually carried out in the name of God or the gurū. It is an important pillar of the Sikh faith.
siddha:	Eighty four exalted personages believed by the the followers of Gorakhnāth to have attained immortality through the practice of Hatha yoga. It is also the name for anti-Brahminical Tamil poets from the sixth century onwards.
Sikh:	A learner or disciple. The term is applied to the disciple of Gurū Nānak and his successors. The <u>Rehat Maryādā</u> speaks of the Sikh as one who believes God, the ten Gurūs, the <u>Adi Granth</u> and the Gurūs' other writings and in the <u>Khālsā</u> initiation ceremony.
simran: (sumiran) (simaran) (smarana)	The word is often translated as remembrance of God. In Rādhāsoāmī circles it is the discipline of the silent repetition of the gurmātra. As such it carries the same meaning as Nām simran.
Śiva:	One of the most important deities of the Hindu pantheon. Śiva is the destroyer of the universe.
sloka:	Couplet or stanza.

smṛti:	It bears the meaning, remembrance or memory. It is the name of those scriptures coming after the śruti.
śruti:	That which is heard. It denotes the whole body of the <u>Veda</u> which was transmitted orally.
surat (1):	The "hearing" faculty of the soul in Rādhāsoāmī Mat. It is also used to mean the consciousness of the soul.
Surat Śabd Yoga:	The yogic discipline of Rādhāsoāmī Mat. It is a meditational discipline that seeks to connect the practitioner to the celestial sound and light.
swāmī:	Spiritual perceptor. It is also a Rādhāsoāmī term for the Lord of the highest cosmic region, Rādhāsoāmī Dhām.
Swateh Sant:	A born Sant. In the <u>Gurmat Siddhānt</u> Swateh Sants are those Satgurūs who are preordained to become Satgurūs and as such do not necessarily require a Satgurū themselves. Gurū Nānak is the cited example.
tamas:	One of the three gunas denoting the forces of darkness. This term figures prominently in the Sāṃkhya system.
Tantra:	Texts enunciating the forms of Śakti worship. It is also the basis of a certain form of yoga.
Tantrikā:	A practitioner of any one of the schools of Tāntra yoga.
tattva:	Literally, that-ness. It is a philosophical principle referring to the true nature of reality.
tīrtha:	Sacred place, Hindu place of pilgrimage.
tīsrā + 11:	The so-called third eye located between and behind the outer eyes. In Rādhāsoāmī Mat it is the seat

	of the soul and the aperture of access to the higher regions.
Trikutī:	Literally, three mountains. It is used in Rādhā-soāmī circles to mean the causal plane.
ulatī chāla:	The Nāth practice of inward regression, i. e., the reversal of all psychological currents and projecting it upwards.
upāsana:	Ritual worship, including prayer.
Uttbhuj:	Forms of life which emanate from seeds, i. e. plant life.
vairāg(ya):	It means detachment or the absence of wordly desires.
vāk: (vac)	Word, the sacred, primeval and creative Word. The <u>Vedas</u> is sometimes referred to as vac.
Varatmak Nām:	The Name which is expressible. It can be spoken or written.
viraha:	The pain of separation from the Beloved (i. e. God)
Viśiṣṭādvaita:	Qualified monism. The doctrine that the human soul its a distinct but subordinate reality.
Viṣṇu:	One of the chief deities of the Hindu pantheon, conceived as the preserver of the universe.
Yama:	The Lord of death. In Rādhāsoāmī literature the name Yamdut is also used.
yoga:	Any one the various systems mental or physical disciplines by which the practitioners may enhance physical or mental well-being. Its ultimate aim is union with the underlying unity of the universe or with God.

yogī:

One who practices yoga.

yuga:

epoch or age in the Hindu system of historical cosmology. There are four yugas- Satyuga, Tretāyuga, Dvāparāyuga and Kālīyuga.

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8

ANAMI

ANAMI LOK

7

AGAM LOK

6

ALAKH LOK

5

THE FIRST ETERNAL
REGION

BAGPIPE

SAT LOK

SAT KHAND

4

FLUTE

BIJANVAR GUPHA

18,000 CONTRIBUTES

3

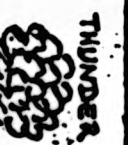
HAKA KALA
FREE SPIRIT

FOUR
SOUND
CURRENTS

MAMA GUHNA
DASVĀN DWAR

2

KALA
CAUSAL



THUNDER
BRAHMA LOK

1

SPIRITUAL
REGION
BRAHMAND

ANDĀ

ASTRAL

HEAVENS
AND
PURGATORIES



JOTI BELL
CONCH
SAHANS-DAL-KARNIVAL

MATERIAL
REGION

PINDĀ

PHYSICAL

MASTER



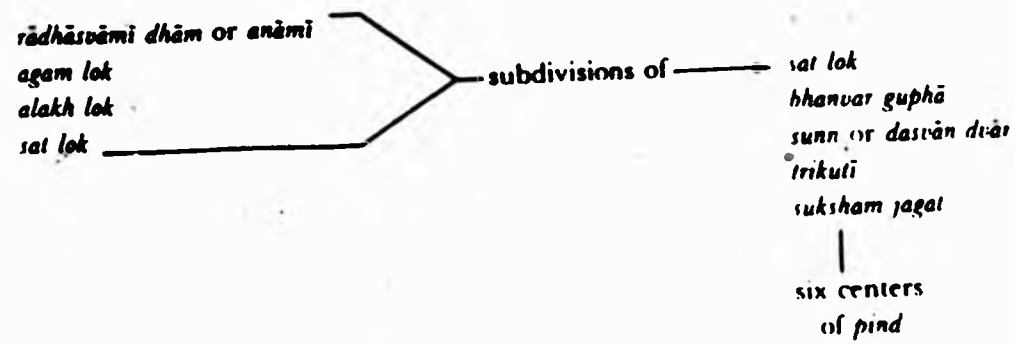
WHEEL OF EIGHT - FOUR

REPRODUCTION

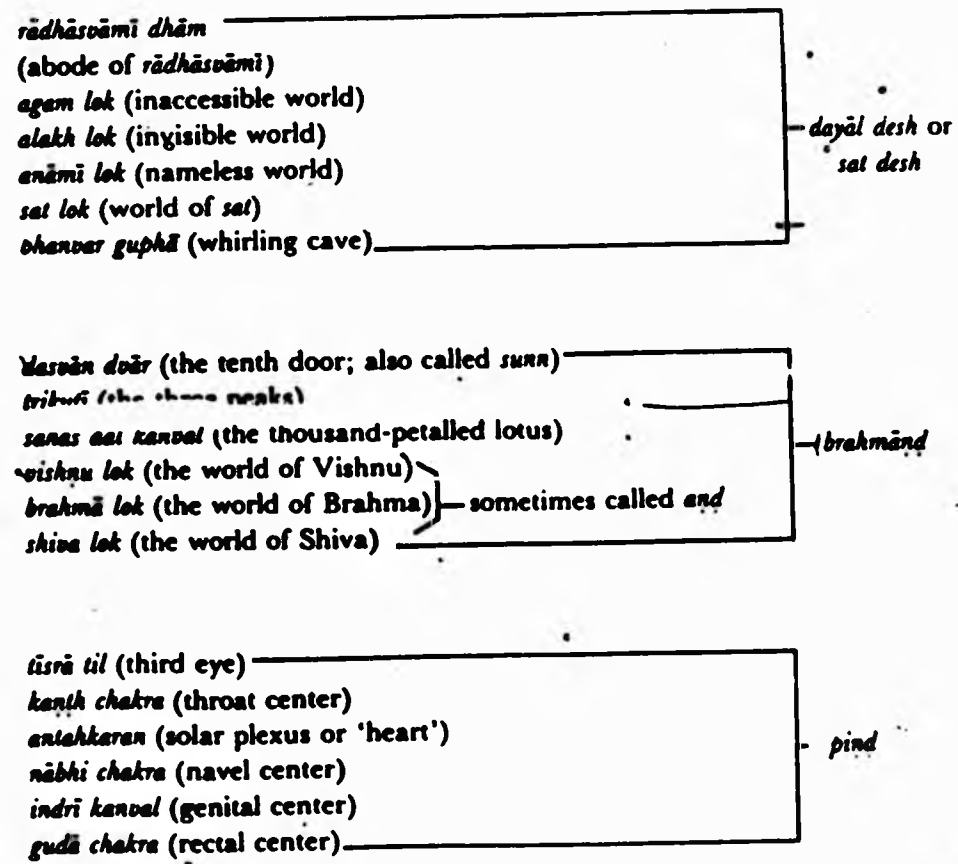
GAURAN

APPENDIX II

THE HIERARCHY OF COSMIC REALMS: BEAS VERSION



THE HIERARCHY OF COSMIC REALMS: AGRA VERSION



Source: Babb, Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition. pp 39 and 47.