

# **JOURNAL PERSPECTIVES ON GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

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*Editor*

**Balwant Singh Dhillon**



**CENTRE ON STUDIES IN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB  
GURU NANAKDEV UNIVERSITY  
AMRITSAR - 143005 (INDIA)**

**JOURNAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON  
GURU GRANTH SAHIB  
(Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib )**

*Editor*

**Balwant Singh Dhillon**

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## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

- Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon**, Director, Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar ñ 143005.
- Dr. Gurnek Singh**, Formerly Acting Vice-Chancellor Sri Guru Granth Sahib Vishav University, Fategarh Sahib, Punjab.
- Dr. J.K. Dhillon**, Formerly Professor and Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar ñ 143005.
- Bhai Aridaman Singh**, Chief Director, International Institute of Sikh Studies, Amritsar-143005.
- Dr. Darshan Singh**, Formerly Professor and Head Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala ñ 147002.
- Dr. Gurnam Singh Sanghera**, Honrary Visiting Professor, Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar - 143005.
- Dr. Hardev Singh Virk**, Formerly Dean Academic Affairs and Professor and Head Department of Physics, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar ñ 143005.
- Dr. Dharam Singh**, Formerly Professor and Head, Department of Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala ñ 147002.
- Dr. Sulakhan Singh**, Professor, Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar ñ 143005.
- Dr. Inderjit Kaur**, Research Scholar, Department of Sikh Studies, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Vishav University, Fatehgarh Sahib-140406.
- Dr. Jatinder Singh**, Assistant Professor, University College, Ghanour, Patiala-147002.
- Ms. Ramnik Arora**, Assistant Professor, Department of French and Francophones Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh-160017.
- Sh. R.S. Tak**, Formerly Associate Professor, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar-143005.
- Dr. Gulzar Singh Kang**, Professor, Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar-143005.

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***Journal***

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**Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib**  
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## PERSPECTIVES ON GURU GRANTH SAHIB

The quadri-centennial celebration of the installation of Guru Granth Sahib in Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar, is the most solemn occasion for the Sikhs. Guru Nanak's experience of the numinous forms the core of Sikh Scripture. Besides the six Sikh Gurus, the sacred writings of fifteen medieval Indian Bhagats and Sufis and persons associated with the Sikh Gurus are preserved in it. The language used in it transcends the boundaries of both religion and region. Its style is a unique blend of music and poetry. The Sikhs look upon it as the very Word of God. In the recent years a number of scholars from diverse fields have shown a keen interest in the Sikh Scripture to fathom its vast ocean of wisdom. To provide a forum to all such scholars, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar has launched a new yearly journal *Perspectives on Guru Granth Sahib*. It carries high quality research papers relating to the various aspects of Guru Granth Sahib.

All other communications are to be addressed to the Editor, Journal of *Perspectives on Guru Granth Sahib*, Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India, Phone: 2258802-09 (3442).

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*Editorial***ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRE ON STUDIES IN  
SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

On September 1, 2004 on the occasion of Celebration of quadri-centennial celebrations of the Installation of Guru Granth Sahib in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India has announced in a public gathering that a National Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib will be established at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

Guru Nanak Dev University had already planned to construct Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan, the foundation stone of which was laid a day earlier i.e. on August 31, 2004 by His Excellency, the President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. It was therefore, proposed that the National Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib be established on the University Campus by expanding this Bhawan with suitable infrastructure, competent faculty, research fellows and supporting staff, so as to make it a Centre of international level. It was also suggested that the Centre should be put on permanent footing by ensuring availability of both the recurring and non-recurring expenditures. It was impressed upon that the durability of the Centre and its continuity are very significant aspects which need be taken care of by the Government of India. Therefore it should be funded by UGC/HRD, Govt. of India on permanent basis.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Scripture of the Sikhs, is one of the newest and the unique scripture in the history of world religions. It owes its origin to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh faith. It was Guru Arjan, the fifth Master, who compiled and canonized the Adi Granth. It comprised the sacred writings of the first five Sikh Gurus and those of the medieval Indian *bhaktas*, and sufis. The Adi Granth, thus prepared, was installed in the Harimandir Sahib, the central Sikh shrine in Amritsar on *Bhadon Sudi Ekam, Bikrami Sammat* 1661 (AD 1604). Guru Gobind Singh, while staying at Talwandi Sabo (Damdama Sahib), incorporated the hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur in it; and before his demise at Nanded in 1708 A.D., he conferred Guruship on the Adi Granth. Thereafter it came to be known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib and revered as the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

Ever since the first installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in 1604, it has been looked upon as the most authentic repository of the divine ěwordi (*sabad, bani*). Its essence lies in its being the vehicle of divine knowledge relevant for all times and spaces. Being historically close to our times, its teachings are more significant and relevant to the problems of our times. Professor Arnold Toynbee has aptly remarked that ĩmankindís religious future may be obscure yet one thing can be foreseen: the living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in the days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its Scripture, the Adi Granth, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world. The message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib addresses to the crucial problems of the modern world. It is a strong votary of amity and co-existence. Its teachings, especially, interfaith understanding, cosmopolitanism, eclecticism, holistic vision of life, future of humankind, approach to the problems of cultural diversity and human inequality and to preserve the Mother Nature are of global significance.

In the context of Sri Guru Granth Sahib being a repository of Divine Word, interfaith dialogue, and also being relevant for an holistic approach to human life and civilization, the study of the origin of Bani, (holy verses), its preservation, various modes of transmission, different schools of exegesis and impact of Guru Granth Sahib upon human beings in general and its devotees in particular, the establishment of a National Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is going to be the most admirable academic endeavour. To conduct in-depth research on various aspects of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Centre will have the following Divisions:

### **1. Division for Studies on Interfaith Understanding:**

As the world is beset with sectarian animosities, Sri Guru Granth Sahibís focus on inter-religious dialogue is very significant. Also significant is the focus on co-existence, amity and human integration. Humaneness forms the bedrock of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and other holy men whose verses are incorporated in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It presents an excellent example of co-existence, cosmo-politanism, interfaith understanding and unity in diversity, which is unparalleled in the history of world scriptures. It rightly confers upon it the status of interfaith scripture. The model of interfaith understanding as propounded in the Sikh Scripture can convince the people belonging to diverse cultures that human beings can accommodate

each others views and live together inspite of their different religious affiliations. There is a need to further this message which requires dedicated and focused research. It is the need of the hour to understand that Sri Guru Granth Sahib addresses not its votaries alone, but the whole humankind.

## **2. Division for Scriptural Studies:**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the fountain-head of Sikh theology and spirituality. Besides the cosmological, metaphysical and ethical percepts, its word view and goal of human life is very unique and significant. The roots of the Sikh institutions are enshrined in it. The contribution of the Sikh Scripture to the Indian thought is an interesting area which requires in depth studies. There are so many mythological and historical references of Hindu gods, goddesses and religious personages. Similarly, Islam particularly Sufism has been given a considerable space in the holy verses of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Numerous references to Buddhism and Jainism, the two ancient religions of India are found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In a way it presents the spiritual tradition of Indian sub-continent that had developed upto the end of seventeenth century. It requires meticulous research at the academic level. It holds great merit to understand the Indian tradition from the viewpoint of comparative study of religion.

The Bhakti and Sufi traditions form the bedrock of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the writings of a good number of Bhaktas and Sufis form a glorious part of the Sikh Scripture. History of the Bhakti Movement, life and teachings of the Bhaktas and Sufis who have contributed to the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and their impact upon the people of Indian subcontinent would form the central feature of the studies carried out in the Centre.

## **3. Division for Studies on Musicology:**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a raga oriented scripture. The whole text has been arranged into 31 musical modes and their composite varieties. It is most suitable for congregational singing. The study of musicology of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is very significant as it represents a unique musical tradition which comprises the classical and folk varieties of music. It is an unprecedented blend. The Sikh Gurus, the Bhaktas and the Sufi Saints not only adopted the Indian musical traditions but adapted it to a popular understanding so that the musical and content part may be synthesized. The ragas of the classical tradition have been oriented to local and folk

traditions. This magnificent localization process has proved very beneficial to the ordinary people. The Gurus themselves invented some of the ragas in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. So the musical tradition of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as propounded by the Gurus and its relationship with the Indian musical tradition requires thorough analysis.

#### **4. Division for Hermeneutic and Linguistic Studies:**

The Sikh Gurus and the other contributors to the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib have expressed their spiritual experience through the medium of poetry composed in various ragas and meters. Although it has been written in Gurmukhi script yet its language transcends the boundaries of religion and regions. It abounds in varieties of Punjabi, Hindi, Braj, Sindhi, Persian, Sanskrit, etc.. The metaphors and similes employed in it speaks volumes of the poetic genius and aesthetic sense of its authors. The study of the semantics of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is equally important along with the content of the text. There is a dire need to understand the language, script, grammar and poetics of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Centre for Hermeneutic and Linguistic studies will take care of the above components. The central focus would be the text and its exegesis. Production of expositional literature would draw the special attention of the scholars.

#### **5. Division for Social and Cultural Studies:**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is very authentic source of social and cultural history of medieval Punjab and India as well. Many of the verses in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib are oriented towards these facts of social and cultural life. Its verses provide significant insights into the social and cultural history of the Sikh Panth. If a comprehensive picture is attempted to be brought forth with reference to Bani, it will considerably enhance our knowledge of the social and cultural history of medieval India.

#### **6. Division for Scriptural Translations:**

To conduct the study on Sri Guru Granth Sahib, there is a need to establish a centre for Scriptural Translation. Sri Guru Granth Sahib will be translated in all the Indian languages. An authentic translation in English is also of seminal importance. There are a good number of English translations but as these vary considerably, so do the meanings of the import of the Bani. If there is one widely accepted translation, it will help to convey the rightful meaning. Similarly, there are translations of the Sri Guru Granth

Sahib in German and French languages. These also need standardization. Sri Guru Granth Sahib will be translated in other languages of the world as well so that its message has the widest spread.

**Approaches to the Study:**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the essential and fundamental source of Sikh religion and philosophy. It is a unique piece of medieval Indian literature which has strong bearings on the contemporary society and politics. Its style is a unique blend of music and poetry which is most suitable for devotional singing. Therefore to conduct research on the various facets of the Sikh Scripture, an interdisciplinary, comparative, and integrated approach needs to be followed. Not only the recent trends in the fields of humanities and social sciences, even insights from the fields of fundamental sciences would be incorporated. To conduct research and avoid duplicity, the Centre will work in close rapport with the universities where research work on Sri Guru Granth Sahib is being done. The faculty of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar working in the fields of Humanities, Social Sciences and Linguistics will be encouraged to take up the research work initiated by the proposed Centre. The proposed research projects will take due notice of the research work being done by the foreign universities in the field of Sikh Studies and respond to the issues raised therein.

**Central Facilities:**

To facilitate research and studies, the following central facilities will be created:

- i) Library having manuscripts, reference and rare book section and also equipped with state of the art facilities.
- ii) Archives with digital facilities and preservation of manuscripts
- iii) Museum
- iv) Conservation Lab
- v) Media Centre
  - a) Print Media
  - b) Electronic Media

**Functioning of the Centre:**

The proposed Centre will enjoy full liberty in its research work.

There will be a Director/Head with considerable knowledge of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, who will oversee its day-to-day functioning. To chalk out the scheduled academic programmes of the Centre there will be an Advisory Committee constituted by the Vice-Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. It will have eminent scholars of Sikh Studies as its members. A nominee of the Chairman of University Grants Commission will also participate as a member. The Advisory Committee will meet under the Chairmanship of the Director/Head. It will monitor the functioning and progress of the research projects. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee will be referred to the Vice-Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, whose decision will be final in this regard.

**Governing Body of the Centre:**

The Centre will have a governing body consisting of 7/9 members. It will meet under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Director/Head of the Centre will be its member secretary. A nominee of the Chairman of UGC; and Secretary, Higher Education, Govt. of Punjab will also be on the governing body of the Centre. Other members of the Governing body will be appointed on the recommendations of the Vice-Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The governing body will have the tenure of 2 years. It will meet atleast once in six months. The governing body will be the sole appointing authority in relation to the positions in the Centre. The budget of the Centre will also be under the purview of Governing Body.

**Publications of Books/Journal/Proceedings:**

For the proper interpretation of the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and for the dissemination of research work done on it, publication of books in various languages of India and world is the need of the hour. Presently this work is not being done academically and in a systematic manner. Even to facilitate the scholars interested in taking up studies on Sri Guru Granth Sahib, research tools in the form of bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopedias, subject indices, glossaries etc. are not available. The proposed centre, besides publishing this type of material, will publish the research work done by the faculty and make it available at the international level. The print and electronic media will be made use of. Publication fund needs to be created for this purpose.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib epitomizes the spiritual tradition of Indian Sub-continent. Besides that of the Sikh Gurus, it comprises the sacred writings of the medieval Indian Bhagats and Sufis. Its message is holistic in nature which is of immense value in solving the ills that we are facing today. It needs to be propagated and made known to the world community. In the recent years, scholars from diverse fields have shown keen interest in Sri Guru Granth Sahib to access the unfathomed ocean of wisdom. The research work done by such scholars need to be published. The proposed Centre will publish a research journal which will exclusively be devoted to the studies on Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It will carry high quality research papers on the various facets of Sikh Scripture and its literature. Proceedings of the seminars/conferences/workshops will also be published.

**Field Work/ Travel Grants:**

Most of the manuscripts and published works relating to the Sikh Scripture and its literature is lying scattered the world over in private and public libraries. To execute the research projects undertaken by the scholars of the proposed Centre, they would have to do a lot of field work like visiting libraries and academic institutions without which thorough and comprehensive studies would not be possible. The field work besides helping the scholars in their studies will help to locate new source material which the Centre would like to procure for its library.

Presently the discipline of Sikh Studies is not confined to the universities of Punjab alone. Some of the Indian and foreign universities beyond the Atlantic are also offering courses on Sikh Studies. Sikh organizations and institutions are coming forward to further the cause of Sikh Studies in collaboration with the foreign universities. Conferences and Seminars at National and International levels are being held to debate the various issues concerning the Sikh history and religion. Scholars working in the Indian universities are often invited to participate and present their papers in these forums. Sometimes they feel helpless to take part in these deliberations as funds to finance their travel expenses are not available. To provide a window as well as to give exposures to the scholars working in the proposed Centre, a special fund for this purpose on yearly basis is also required.



**Positions and Appointments:**

As the proposed research work to be undertaken by the Centre is of serious and delicate nature, it requires professional skills and understanding of a very high order. It can be done only if the services of mature and seasoned scholars are utilized. Therefore besides the regular faculty, superannuated scholars would also be employed. Eminent scholars who have done commendable work on Sri Guru Granth Sahib will be appointed as visiting professors and research fellows on term based projects. The senior scholars who can not come to join the Centre will be offered off campus fellowships to complete the research projects assigned to them.

**Accommodation for the Faculty:**

As the proposed Centre will require the services of very senior and reputed scholars, providing them congenial atmosphere and making their stay in Amritsar comfortable, suitable accommodation is required. Presently many of the faculty members of the University are living outside the campus in rented houses. University bye-laws do not allow out-of-the-turn accommodation. In this situation the proposed Centre must have its own residential complex besides the other buildings and infrastructure. Residential complex for various categories of the employees need be built. University will provide a piece of 10 acres land to begin with for this purpose.

**Conferences/ Seminars/Workshops/Orientation Courses:**

It is felt that the Centre would provide a major platform for interfaith understanding to pave the way for communal harmony. For this purpose, it would be frequently holding symposiums, seminars and conferences at National and International level. Short term orientation courses will be held wherein the research work conducted by the scholars will be made known to the participants and elaborate discussions would be held thereupon. An Auditorium and a Conference Hall with modern infrastructure and other facilities are being proposed as an integral component of the Centre for this purpose.

It is hoped, when the Centre becomes fully functional, it would be a befitting tribute to the living memory and the vision of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

## GENESIS AND PARAMETERS OF THE SIKH EXEGESIS

*Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon*

Ever since its first codification in 1604, the Sikh Scripture has been looked upon as the most authentic repository of the divine *ēWordī*. The whole mass of sacred writings included in it is known as *bani* or *gurbani*. As proclaimed by Guru Nanak and his successors *bani* is not merely a product of speculation or imagination of a poet but the highest kind of divine knowledge that had descended directly from the God.<sup>1</sup> It enjoys an unparalleled place of significance in the Sikh way of life. The Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is not merely a scripture but an eternal Guru of the Sikhs. The Sikh Panth has taken guidance from it to reinterpret itself at different stages of its history.

The history of Sikh scriptural tradition begins with Guru Nanak whose experience of the Numinous forms its very core and basis as well. An examination of Guru Nanak's hymns makes it abundantly clear that he considered himself a divine minstrel whose chief avocation was to sing the glories of God.<sup>2</sup> He made the divine *ēWillī* known through the medium of *bani* which left an indelible imprint on the subsequent growth of Sikh scriptural tradition. It provided powerful stimulus to his successors who not only took a keen interest to preserve its originality but also added new hymns to the received text. Though, a number of authors have contributed to the Sikh Scripture yet the whole literature enshrined in it, is religious in nature. It sets it apart from an ordinary piece of music and poetry.

The Sikh Scripture derives its authority from the self-illuminating eternal Truth. Every hymn of it focuses on the Ultimate Reality which is Sui-generis, Transcendental and Immanent as well. The chief objective of *gurbani* is to reconnect the humanity with its source i.e. the Ultimate Reality and realize it within the inner self. In fact the whole mass of sacred writings included in the Sikh Scripture not only underlines the divine mission

of Guru Nanak but also inspires the devotees to work for its fulfillment. It attempts to make the God known through its various names, attributes and acts of grace. One way of knowing the God is the way of love which develops into an intimate feeling of the presence of Ultimate Reality all around in this world. It is an extra-ordinary experience that belongs to the spiritual realm. It can be encountered directly at personal level but cannot be transmitted from one person to another. The validity of this truth or knowledge depends upon the intensity of religious experience of the recipient. In the Primitive religions this type of experience is expressed in the ecstatic utterances of the *shamans*. However in the Sikh Scripture yearning for union with God and pangs of separation from Him have been expressed through the analogy of husband-wife relationship.<sup>3</sup> The nature of this unique, highly personal and transforming experience has been explained through the mystic terms such as *anand*, *vismad*, *sahaj*, *atamras*, *turiya pad*, *anhad nad*, etc. It is beyond empirical and rational verification. The words and language cannot convey its full import. Therefore metaphors, symbols and similes are employed to explain it. Sometimes full sense and correct meanings of the metaphors and mystical terms are beyond the comprehension of people where the exegetical works play a crucial role.

The subject of exegesis i.e. explanation of the written text has always been of central importance to all the religious traditions of the world. The development, exposition and vitality of any religion can be understood from the attempts of its exegesis. The Christianity has developed the field of hermeneutics, exegesis and systematic theology as the specialized subjects to interpret its texts. Similarly, in the Indian tradition *teeka* (commentary), *bhashaya* (exegesis) and *paramarth* (spiritual meanings) have been very popular subjects in the religious literature. An examination of the literature on Sikh exegesis reveals that its history is as old as the Sikh Scripture itself. Its origin, earlier approaches, methods and purpose were quite different.

The divine knowledge contained in the *bani* is eternal and universal in character. It is beyond the limits of time and space, thus it is relevant for all human beings living anywhere in the world. It expresses the religious experience of its authors who were oriented towards God. Their experience is highly personal and belongs to the spiritual domain. Neither it can be transmitted from one person to another nor can it be expressed in its totality.

Guru Nanak observes that this experience of the Numinous is indescribable one.<sup>4</sup> Here comes the role of metaphors and similes which are often used to convey the spiritual import of the message. That is why the nature of religious language is always quite different than that of the secular or ordinary language. Expression or transmission of religious experience in the form of spoken or written words is a first step towards its explanation. In this way the *bani* of Guru Nanak, is the first attempt which explains his spiritual encounter with the God. Thus the self-explanation of the mission of Guru Nanak in the form of *bani* that began with him and nurtured by his successors unfolds the process of Sikh exegesis at work. The need to preserve the religious experience of Guru Nanak and his successors in its original form resulted in the formation of Sikh canon. The norm of *sachi-bani* evolved by Guru Amar Das served the purpose of canon and played a major role to decide about the inclusion of writings forming part of the Sikh Scripture.<sup>5</sup> With the formation of Sikh canon attempts to explain its percepts began. Resultantly various traditions of Sikh exegesis came into existence which were known for their peculiar ways, means, methods and motives. It is worth-noting that any exegetical school may incorporate the prevalent means, methods and techniques yet it cannot ignore the authenticity of the Sikh canon i.e. the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

We observe that the Sikh Gurus had expressed their experience of the Numinous in the form of *bani*. According to them *gurbani* represents the *sabad* i.e. logos, which is present everywhere in this universe.<sup>6</sup> The *sabad* is the vehicle of divine revelation which came to manifest through the ěSpirit of Nanakí. In other words *bani* of Guru Nanak is the first attempt to reveal and explain the divine mission on which he had been commissioned by God. The exegetical process of the Sikh text can be traced back to the times of Guru Nanak. In this context the testimony of Bhai Gurdas is very revealing: He says:

When Baba Nanak came to stay at Kartarpur  
he discarded ascetic robes. He donned the household  
dress and sitting on the bed stead started preaching  
his mission in order to enlighten his disciples,  
he revealed his message through the medium of *bani*.  
It was always followed by a dialogue and discourse on the  
spiritual matters.<sup>7</sup>

On the basis of above evidence we can well imagine that along with the revelation of *bani* tradition of religious discourse to expound its percepts owes its origin to Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak's *bani* was the driving force which inspired his successors to compose new hymns. Although the volume of Guru Angad's *bani* is not big in size, yet it underlines the basic concepts of the theology of Guru Nanak in a very crisp and systematic manner. A close reading of the hymns of Sikh Gurus reveals that at some places they have elaborated and commented upon the concepts that had been mentioned by Guru Nanak. Prof. Taran Singh has categorized it as the *sahaj pranali* i.e. tradition of *gurbani* interpretation that owes its origin to the state of equipoise. He quotes some passages from the writings of later Sikh Gurus where they have provided interpretation of the works of their predecessors.<sup>8</sup> We may call it exposition of scripture through the scripture. In this context the best example of expounding the meanings of scripture through the medium of scripture is offered by a hymn of Guru Ram Das:

ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਨਿਰਭਉ॥ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਤਿ॥  
 ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ॥  
 ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਅਨਦਿਨੋ ਧਿਆਇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਾਹਾਰੀ  
 ॥<sup>9</sup>

And also :

ਸਭਿ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਆਦਿ ਸਤੇ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਤੇ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਸਤੇ  
 ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਤੇ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਦਾਸੁ ਦਸੋਨਾ॥<sup>10</sup>

One cannot fail to note that above verses read like a commentary on the *Mulmantra* and the *saloka* immediately following it. The use of scriptural references in order to expound the text as well as to define the technical terms is the most valid and reliable method of exegesis. The Sikh Gurus have resorted to the above methodology at a number of places in the Sikh Scripture.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes the *bani* of Guru Nanak is considered a commentary on his *Japuji* and in similar fashion the hymns of the later Sikh Gurus are taken as elaboration of the works of Guru Nanak.<sup>12</sup> Actually, neither the Sikh Gurus had done it consciously nor their writings can be divested of their originality. If the *bani* of later Sikh Gurus helps us to understand the works of Guru Nanak then it does not mean that it is of supplementary character. One should not forget the Sikh idea of unity of Guruship which

extends the spiritual authority of Guru Nanak to his successors as well. The whole Sikh Scripture is the self-expression of the ěSpirit of Nanakí. Therefore the *bani* of succeeding Sikh Gurus is an integral part of the original experience. In case we are to consider *gurbani* as one of the tradition of exegesis then we can say that the whole Sikh Scripture is an attempt to express and explains the experience of Numinous that the Sikh Gurus had got in the form of *sabad*. It is the first authentic and authoritative explanation of Sikhism. Neither the later traditions of exegesis can overrule it nor can they ignore the parameters underlined in it. Any attempt in the contrary would be to dilute the originality of the experience of *bani*. The touch-stone or yard stick for any exegesis would be of *gurbani* which is the original source of Sikhism.

In the field of Sikh exegesis next in importance to *gurbani* comes the works of Bhai Gurdas. He was a close associate of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth Sikh Gurus and had seen the development of Sikhism from very close quarters. He had been amanuensis to Guru Arjan and helped him to compile and canonize the Sikh Scripture. In fact he was the most qualified and learned Sikh of his times whose knowledge of *gurbani* and its theology was par-excellence. His compositions hold the status of key to the understanding of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In *Sikhan Di Bhagatmala*, an eighteenth century Sikh source attributed to Bhai Mani Singh, there is an interesting anecdote attributed to Guru Arjan which describes that:

Bhai Harbans Tapa used to recite the *bani* of Granth Ji. In the early morning and during the third quarter of the day he read the works of Bhai Gurdas. One day he enquired from the Guru that whether the Sikhs should read the writings of Bhai Gurdas or not? The Guru replied that his rivals (detractors) are ignorant and they have composed poetry out of jealousy only. They have not taken any guidance from the *sabad*. That type of poetry has been banned. The works of Bhai Gurdas are just like *teeka* (commentary) on the *sabad*. It helps to attain the spirit of Sikhism.<sup>13</sup>

The above statement provides a peep into the acceptability and respect that Bhai Gurdasí works enjoyed in the Sikh circles. We observe that the oral exposition of *gurbani* in the form of dialogue and discourse that began with Guru Nanak at Kartarpur, was continued by the later Gurus

also. The *bani* of Guru Ram Das testifies to the fact that the Sikhs used to visit the Guru to have a dialogue with him on the spiritual matters.<sup>14</sup> Bhai Gurdas also informs that after having filled the treasure of *gurbani*, Guru Arjan was always engrossed in propagating it through the medium of *katha* (discourse) and *kirtan* (divine music).<sup>15</sup> We are told that Bhai Gurdas was a great oral exponent of *gurbani*.<sup>16</sup> On the instruction of Guru Arjan, he started regular *katha* (oral exposition) which was held after the *kirtan* of *Asa di Var* in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.<sup>17</sup>

A careful perusal of the works of Bhai Gurdas confirms that his *vars* are basically concerned with the mission of Guru Nanak which had fructified in the form of a new religion. He presents it in the context of contemporary milieu and establishes that it has its own system of doctrines. He defines very carefully and logically all the concepts of Sikh theology and pin points the basic features of Sikh way of life. His *Kabit-Swayyas* unfold the nature of Sikh mysticism. The first exposition of *Japuji* outside the Guru Granth Sahib is found in the works of Bhai Gurdas, especially in *vars* 8 and 21.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes his works read like a commentary on the *bani*. For example his exposition of the *Mulmantra* and the concluding *saloka* of the *Japuji* present a wonderful exposition in verse.<sup>19</sup> He depicts deep understanding of the Indian religious tradition and its mythology. Besides he was a keen observer of the contemporary social religious and cultural milieu. He has employed this knowledge very artistically and perfectly in order to expound the cause of Sikhism. For example in the first *var* he puts question mark on the relevance of Hinduism and Islam and provides legitimacy to the origin of Sikhism. He was a great exponent of the Sikh culture and did not miss any opportunity to depict its unique and independent identity. He makes liberal use of Indian mythology and philosophical systems in order to illustrate his view-point. He possessed uncommon poetic talent and has the skill to describe the epics, namely the Ramayana and Mahabharata in a single stanza only.<sup>20</sup> His purpose was not to propagate these epics but to elaborate the percepts of *gurbani*. Not only the parables from Hindu mythology, but he has the ingenuity to employ metaphors, symbols and similes taken from local surroundings and culture. Sometimes he refers to a series of metaphors to hammer his view-point. One thing must be kept in mind that neither he uses logic like a Christian theologian nor he attempts his exegesis in the form of a systematic

theology.<sup>21</sup> Similarly he does not behave like a *teekakar* to unfold the meanings of the words. His chief motive was to present the Sikh beliefs and the mission of the Sikh Gurus in the context of contemporary milieu and for it he has followed the technique of *gurbani*. That is why his works has acquired the status of extended Sikh canon. He combines the qualities of a theologian and an exegete so well that none can surpass him for his style and richness of expression. The method and techniques employed by Bhai Gurdas are so powerful and convincing that all these qualities has made his exposition the most authoritative one. Whenever there have been a need for authentic exposition of Sikhism, the Panth has always taken recourse to it.

Although the Sikh Scripture is written in poetry, yet it is intimately connected with spirituality. The temporal and spiritual matters intermingle in it in a very fine manner. Its authors have commented upon the metaphysical issues which are beyond rational and empirical verification. The chief objective or the most cherished theme of each hymn revolves around realization of God which is again a religious and highly personal experience. All these factors put together make it difficult to unfold the mystical meanings of the text. One may be a top class linguist and an outstanding grammarian yet he/she cannot claim with certainty that his/her exposition of the text is final and authoritative one. Besides the knowledge of hermeneutics, spiritual aptitude of an exegete may be of some help to codify the metaphorical and allegorical nuances of its poetry. To explain and define the philosophical and theological ideas one has to search into the insights of the authors of this Scripture. Another parameter in this regard is the compositions of Bhai Gurdas who had mastered the Sikh scriptural tradition under the guidance of Sikh Gurus. His comments and exposition of Sikh theology may serve the purpose of further illumination.

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 795.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 920.
6. *Ibid.*, pp.32, 33, 940.
7. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 1:38



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17. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
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## SIKH EXEGESIS : MEANING AND SCOPE

*Dr. Gurnek Singh*

The word *exegesis* carries great importance in the history of interpretation of the Scriptures. Its literal meaning is critical explanation or interpretation of a Scripture<sup>1</sup> and a literary commentary which is that branch of theology which deals with the interpretation and exposition of a Scripture is called *exegesis*. The word has been derived from the Greek word *exegeesthai* which literally means to explain or to guide. The Scriptures being divinely inspired words of God are difficult to follow and the *exegesis* is needed to explain their respective literal and the esoteric meanings. In the words of R.E. McNally, the purpose of *exegesis*, therefore, is to bring out, set forth, and explain author's thought.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, it is a form of explanation, exposition, a critical analysis, and interpretation of a Scripture and to bring to the surface the hidden meanings of the message contained in the Scriptures.

We also find some other terms which are used as almost synonyms for the word *exegesis*, such as interpretation, exposition and explanation. An all-comprehensive term *hermeneutics* includes the meaning of all these terms in its scope. *Hermeneutics*, i.e., the science of interpretation, emerged as a discipline in the 13th century to bring out the message of the Bible to the layman and the scholars. All these terms used for the exposition of Scripture sometimes overlap and lead to a sort of confusion. For example, the term interpretation is used when the endeavor is to bring out the whole message of the Scripture but the word *exegesis* was used for the Biblical explanation only. *Exegesis*, according to L.F. Hartman, is the exposition of a passage or a book of a sacred Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Origen (d.c.254), pioneer in the field of Biblical interpretation, and an ancient *exegete* of the Bible, as quoted by R.E. McNally, wrote that a multiplicity of senses (meanings) can be found in the sacred text. For just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture.<sup>4</sup> That is, the given text of a Scripture may simultaneously yield

three different levels of meaning: the literal or historical, the moral or tropological and the spiritual or mystical. The Christian exegetes interpreted the Bible in medieval, high middle and the modern periods at the literal, moral and the spiritual levels, respectively.

Fundamental to the medieval exegete was the literal or the historical exegesis of the Bible whereas in the high Middle Ages the emphasis shifted to the deeper elements of exegesis. Then, further a transition occurred. In the modern period exegetes approach their subject scientifically and critically. Scripture being a divinely inspired word, its essence cannot be grasped by interpreting it at the literal level only. It is, therefore, imperative on the part of the exegete to approach the text not only on the literal but also on the higher level. By following the historical method one cannot arrive at the hidden meaning of the Scripture. At the initial stages to remain on the literal or historical level is useful as it leads one to the higher level and the exegete goes on to explore the deeper layers of the meanings.

The literal meaning does not explain the Scripture fully. Advocating that literal sense of the word is not enough to understand the Scripture, John Wilkinson, quoting Origen, says that the Jews and the heretics have thus misunderstood them because they have followed the literal sense, and failed to recognize that they deal with things of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> So the deeper meanings, i.e., moral and spiritual, of the Scripture are sought by delving deep into the divine mystery contained therein. The central task of the exegesis of Scripture is completed in answering three questions:

1. What is the theological (allegorical) meaning of this historical event?
2. What is its moral (tropological) meaning?
3. What is its eschatological (anagogic) meaning?

The method is well illustrated by the traditional exegesis of the word Jerusalem: in the literal sense it is the city of Jews; in the allegorical sense the Church on earth; in the tropological sense, the virtuous Christian; and in the anagogic sense, the Church in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

From the above account of the Biblical exegesis we can make out that the mystical meaning of a Scripture cannot be discovered by following the literal interpretation. So to remain only on the literal level is to keep one in the darkness, or to keep one away from the anagogic meaning which

is purposely the real meaning: the allegorical sense is said to lie behind the literal sense. The tropological sense is that kind of interpretation whereby a reader finds a moral lesson in the words: and in the anagogical sense, the meaning is raised from earthly to heavenly subjects.<sup>7</sup>

Kapur Singh quotes Dante, an Italian poet and philosopher, who lists four levels of meanings in accordance with which the Scriptures should be understood and expounded. He is also of the view that the literal level of interpretation is the least significant whereas best and the most authentic one is the anagogical.<sup>8</sup> We find that stress has explicitly been laid on the anagogical sense of the word incorporated in the Scripture. The modern authorities on semantics also accept, in principle, Dante's classification of the meanings of scriptures under the nomenclature of (1) designative mode, which conveys information about existing and actual thing; (2) appraisive mode, which weighs given information and accords preference to one or the other meanings attributed; (3) prescriptive mode which seeks to guide interpreters to achieve specified goals; and (4) the formative mode, which furnishes illustrations of formative-informative discourse by inducing valuations.<sup>9</sup>

## I

The perusal of world religious literature leads us to the conclusion that the need of exegesis of the Scripture is felt immediately after the writing of the Scripture. Sometimes it came into vogue in the very august time of the preceptor. Dialogue was earliest form of exegesis of the Divine word. We gather from traditional literature, Lord Buddha and Guru Nanak followed the method of dialogue to impart their teachings. There are several reasons why the need of exegesis is felt. Firstly, the utterances or hymns contained in a Scripture are uttered in a rapturous mood being in complete union with Almighty. Such a preceptor dwells not only on the physical sphere but also becomes the denizen of celestial regions. The mystic experience he achieves is conveyed through symbols which underneath carry the different meanings from that of the surface level. Thus the symbolic meanings are beyond the comprehension of a layman as well as a scholar. Secondly, like every living organ, language also develops with the change of time. It changes with the passage of time and some old words become obsolete and their meanings become vague. The new words come into use in place of the old ones: as Piar Singh holds

that change with the passage of time and space is the nature of language.<sup>10</sup> Thirdly, an exposition of the Scripture is needed not only because of its symbolic language but also because of the nature of Divine knowledge. Almost whole of the scriptural lore is the result of the devotional and intuitional set of mind. The resultant problem of comprehension ensues.

For reasons enumerated above, a Scripture needs exegesis. According to R.E. McNally, its exposition and interpretation is of great import to set forth and explain its full thoughts.<sup>11</sup> In the history of humankind we find that the exegetical literature in all the religious traditions is almost as old as their Scriptures. The Vedas are the earliest records in Indian religious literature and their exegetical literature in the form of Brahmanas was written in the Vedic age itself. Similar is the case with the other Scriptures of the world.<sup>12</sup>

## II

The present essay is basically concerned with expository works of Gurbani produced by the Sikh scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Sikh expository literature, the word *ṭikaí* carries the same meaning. The word exegesis is a general term used for the overall exposition of the Scripture. All other terms, such as explication, interpretation and exposition carry the meaning expressed in exegesis and are in subordination to the word exegesis. *Tika* in its loose sense is line-to-line interpretation giving the literal meanings of the words. Interpretation is the theological and philosophical study of Gurbani. The works which deal with the explanation of some portions of the *bani* (line-to-line explanations) can also be considered under the category of exegesis (*tika*).

An exegete's interpretation depends on the assumptions he brings to it. The Vedic seer declares (R.V. I, 164-65), the human speech translating the mystic experience of the Word is, at its best, three steps removed from the original impact.<sup>13</sup> The language of the Scripture is symbolic, for it conveys the expressions of the author's experience of the metaphysical Reality which is not substantial and, unlike material objects, is not the subject of senses. Its intellectual analysis and comprehension is not possible. S. Anirvan says that mere intellectual ingenuity and superficial judgment will not help us because here we are dealing with things of the spirit where an interpretation can hope to be true only when understanding has come through spiritual communion and insight.<sup>14</sup> He further says that the most

important thing needed is that an exegete should have faith in the supra-sensible Truth and should follow the path to attain that truth.<sup>15</sup> The resultant spiritual communion is established enabling one to go deep into the layers of the literal meanings as well as the anagogic meaning enshrined in the Scripture. This is unavoidable requirement as interpretation always presupposes a spiritual communion.<sup>16</sup> S. Anirvan elaborates that this becomes imperative when one seeks to interpret a culture, a way of thought, or a thing of the spirit.<sup>17</sup>

To understand and properly follow the Scripture we find from the Biblical tradition seven rules of interpretation given by Hillel; these were later expanded to thirteen by Ishmael.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in Indian tradition, the exegetical study of the Vedic texts, John Wilkinson explains that the infallible rule of interpretation of a Scripture is the Scripture itself.<sup>19</sup> However, the interpretation must have a deep religious insight in order to interpret the Scripture in its proper context. He should have knowledge of the history of interpretation and should take the advantage of the exegetical works of earlier scholars. The interpreter should be well aware of the fact that the real meaning of a text can be known by interpreting it in its proper context and words and lines should not be interpreted in isolation; for such an attempt will not yield desired results. An interpreter of a religious or scriptural text should not only have the knowledge of its history, but also its geography. Gopal Singh holds that every religion has not only a history, but also geography of its own, and anyone who emphasizes the one without reference to the other fails signally in any honest attempt at the interpretation of a religion.<sup>20</sup> An interpreter does not attempt in one way or by adopting one mode of interpretation. The history of interpretation reveals that various modes have been adopted which gave birth to different forms.

### III

Scriptures being of divine origin and in the form of symbolic expressions always need interpretation. In the religious as well as secular traditions the practice of interpretation is almost universal. Most of the compositions have been explained to the readers through exegetical works. The earliest Indian religious texts, i.e., the Vedas, the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita have time and again been explained and expounded through commentaries by different authors to make their meanings accessible to

the common man. We also find the exegetical literature in abundance in all religious traditions. The only purpose behind these commentaries, as we have already stated, has been to explain and expound the esoteric meaning otherwise unknown and unapproachable to the scholars as well as to the laymen.

In Sikhism the tradition of exegesis goes as far back as to the times of Guru Nanak Dev. Guru Nanak Dev himself during his odysseys explained his hymns to impart the divine knowledge to the people at large. In the course of his preachings the Guru held prolonged philosophical discourses with the leaders of some of the religions prevalent at that point of time. Some of these discussions were later on formulated, such as, in the case of the *sidh-gosht* (discussion with Siddhs). In such religious parlances the divine Word was the sole vehicle. Its singing and expounding was the only method adopted by Guru Nanak Dev. Tradition goes that Guru Arjan Dev commissioned Bhai Gurdas to explain the *bani* to the people.<sup>21</sup> The exegetical literature has been written in various forms such as *tika*, *viakhia*, *bhash*, *parmarth*, *padarth*, etc. In the Sikh exegetical literature all these terms have been applied for the *tika*. No distinction here has been made.

In Sikhism *tika* is the common inclusive term used for exegetical works. The word *tika* is of Sanskrit origin. Its etymological meaning is to explain or give a commentary.<sup>22</sup> It explains the meanings of a text in brief. And it also explicates. It is that sentence structure which explains the deep-rooted meaning of a word or concept.

*Viakhia* or exposition is that form of exegetical literature in which the exegete endeavors to bring out the meaning in greater detail. In it along with the word meaning, the central idea, and meaning of a *sabad* is derived in context of total composition and, personal comments, and where necessary the cogent sources of other exegetical literature are also given. It actually is the study of a given text in totality from the various aspects.

The *bhash* is a form of *viakhia* to some extent. It mainly stresses on the obscurities involved in the writing. Like the *viakhia*, the exegete in *Bhash* intends to add certain elements from the outer sources to explain and explicate the meanings more clearly.

*Parmarth* literally (*parm+arth*) means spiritual meaning, i.e., the meaning other than the literal one of a text. We find this mode in the Puranic

literature from which it came into Sikh exegetical literature during the Udasi or Nirmala endeavour at Sikh exegesis. The exegete explains and explores the essential inner content of the text sometimes for the purpose of clarification, sometimes he tries to create dialogue. The writer intends to go deep into the layers of the meaning of the words and bring hidden meaning to the surface.

*Padarth* literally (*pad+arth*) are the word-meanings, i.e., the literal meaning in the form of synonyms.

*Tika* writing came into vogue after the passing away of Guru Nanak Dev. It is not an easy task. It is quite a laborious task which requires deep knowledge of the language concerned, its grammar and the subject matter of the writing. A *tika* writer, says Anandghan, must be able to understand the deepest meaning of the writing and through the medium of *tika* he must have an access to the emotions of the writer. He should not determine the meaning according to his own preferences and should be honest and objective in his explanations. The prejudices of the interpreter sometimes produce disastrous results and must be consciously avoided. A text can have many different meanings and the interpreter should always try to bring greater clarity than the earlier interpretation.<sup>23</sup>

Another important form adopted by the Sikh exegetes is *parmarth*. A good *parmarth* writer, according to Taran Singh, should have the following qualities:

1. He should try to describe the circumstances, the context, the atmosphere and the place of writing while he is exegetising.
2. He should give meanings with full honesty and sincerity.
3. The writing should be interpreted in accordance with the central theme of the whole writing.
4. He should explain the writing in such a way that its literal, spiritual, literary and historic meanings might be grasped by the reader easily and automatically.
5. He should have full knowledge of the history, mythology, literature, philosophy, the religious and mystic traditions of the place to which the writing belongs, so that the *parmarth* might retain its interest.



6. He should have full faith in the writing he is exegetising.<sup>24</sup>

Sodhi Miharban, a nephew of Guru Arjan Dev and a rival claimant of guruship adopted this form of interpretation for the first time in the Gurbani interpretation. His composition *Pothi Sachkhand* contains the *parmarthas* of about two hundred hymns of Guru Nanak Dev. After his demise, his sons Sodhi Hariji and Sodhi Chaturbhuj also wrote *parmarthas* of Gurbani. *Parmarth* form of Gurbani exegesis has not been attempted after the Sodhi family.

#### IV

Twentieth century, historically speaking, is of great importance in the Sikh annals, especially in the history of Sikh exegesis. Prior to this period, the *tikakari* (annotation) and *viakhia* (interpretation) of Gurbani was traditional in outlook and execution. Nirmala and Giani schools of interpretation were active in expounding Gurbani in the traditional way. The tone of the Nirmala exposition was Vedantic and philosophic. Says Gurbachan Singh Talib about the *Faridkot Tika*: 'This is a learned work with inclination towards Indian philosophy, Puranic lore and Vedantism, but it nevertheless is a remarkably helpful work in understanding the original text. At places it appears to lose itself in traditional Brahmanical learning.'<sup>25</sup> Pandit Tara Singh was representative of this school. He has produced enormous literature. Most of his works are in the form of commentaries.

Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot (1842-98) secured the services of some traditional Gianis who were the representatives of the existing Giani School of interpretation. One representative among them was Giani Badan Singh. Under the aegis of Raja Bikram Singh, he along with other scholars of traditional Sikh learning produced a full length *tika* of the Guru Granth Sahib for the first time in 1883 which was published in 1906 and is popularly known as *Faridkoti Tika*. This was traditional exposition of the Sikh Scripture, for the founder of this school of exegesis Bhai Mani Singh and others are believed to have been trained in the exposition of Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh himself at Talvandi Sabo in Bhatinda district of Punjab. This *tika* is culmination of this school of interpretation. The *Faridkoti Tika* was produced in reaction to the work of a German missionary Ernest Trumpp, who offended the Sikhs by making disparaging remarks about the Gurus and their religion. To counter this, the Sikh traditional Gianis joined their hands under the inspiration of Raja Bikram

Singh and consequently this commentary was produced. The last important work in this regard was M.A. Macauliffe's attempt entitled '*The Sikh Religion*'. Macauliffe undertook this endeavour at his own and the effort was to assuage the hurt feelings of the Sikhs over the Trumpp's work. Macauliffe writes that a portion of the Guru Granth Sahib was translated some years since by a German missionary at the expense and under the auspices of the India Office, but his work was highly inaccurate and unidiomatic, and further more gave mortal offence to the Sikhs by the odium theologicum introduced into it. Whenever he saw an opportunity of defaming the Gurus, the sacred book, and the religion of the Sikhs, he eagerly availed himself of it.<sup>26</sup> These earlier attempts of Gurbani exegesis by the traditional interpreters both directly as well as indirectly influenced the 20<sup>th</sup> century exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Indian religious life witnessed a large number of religious movements aimed at reforming and reinterpreting the traditional religions. Emergence of a number of new factors influenced and necessitated this new development. The Gurbani exegesis could not remain unaffected by the growth of this new situation. Says Gurbachan Singh Talib, 'Since the introduction of the Western type of learning, certain new aids and study on the lines of modern scholarship have been introduced. With footnotes, alphabetical glossaries and concordances, dependence on sheer memory, characteristic of the older type of Giani school has been reduced, and new helpful books in print are made available, to guide anyone engaged in some aspect of the study of Gurbani at any level.'<sup>27</sup> Large number of new exegetical works came to be produced during these decades. There was conscious departure from the traditional modes of interpretation. The twentieth century Sikh exegetes were highly educated and well versed in western education, religion and literature. They were highly influenced by the customs, manners and etiquette of the Western civilization.

In the Indian sub continent it was predominantly a period of change. Science and technology was rapidly developing thereby effecting a change in the thinking and attitude of the people. In order to meet this challenge a new interpretation of the Scripture thus became necessary. The Sikh scholars trained on the Western lines endeavoured hard to interpret Gurbani in the modern context. To cope with the changing times one has to express

himself in the contemporary historical milieu. Some of the characteristic features of the exegetical works by the twentieth century Sikh exegetes are as follows.

The traditional interpreters had offered exegesis of the individual compositions only. The twentieth century exegetes endeavoured to offer the exposition of whole of Guru Granth Sahib. The traditional exponents of Gurbani had made extensive use of fable and story elements in their exposition but the twentieth century exponents switched over to the grammatical techniques. Sahib Singh and Teja Singh laboured hard to discover the grammar of Gurbani. They interpreted the meaning of the terms and verses according to the rules of grammar. The story technique as a help to interpret the Scripture came to be discarded. The interpretation became more rational and less speculative.

Instead of giving more than one meaning of the term the twentieth century exegetes gave only one meaning. Thus, an element of certainty came to be associated with the interpretation of this period. This new generation of Sikh scholars was well versed in languages such as, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Prakrit, Punjabi and the dialects of Punjabi, such as, Pothohari, Lahindi, Dakhani, employed in the Guru Granth Sahib. They were thus more competent to offer a more correct meaning of the Gurbani than traditional exponents.

The twentieth century scholars, unlike the traditional scholars, brought a comparative perspective to the interpretation of the Sikh Scripture. They were well read in the Scriptures of other religions and their interpretation. They interpreted Gurbani in the light of their knowledge of other religions and thus offered explanation in a broader perspective which was simply beyond the reach of the traditional interpreters.

These scholars were also familiar with the Western philosophy. They employed the philosophical notions in their interpretation. Their interpretation was oriented to offer Sikh solution to the Western philosophical questions. The rational techniques thus came to occupy a central place in their exposition of the Gurbani.

The twentieth century Sikh exegetical works were, in part at least, a response to the challenge of the Christian missionaries. The Christian missionaries under the patronage of the Colonial power attempted to

explain the Indian religions as the most savage and irrational forms of belief. They sought to present Christianity and Christian theology as most logical and advanced religion available anywhere in the world. Theology as we know was the central concern for the Christian interpreters. They raised theological questions about the Indian religions and when they could not find satisfactory answers they labeled them as backward and superstitious. The twentieth century Sikh interpreters attempted to give a new orientation to the traditional interpretation. Ideas such as God, Guru, Nam, Sabad, Grace, etc came to be developed in great detail. Theology thus became the central concern of the twentieth century Sikh exegetes.

These scholars were far more aware of the distinct identity of the Sikh faith and tradition than the traditional interpreters. The Udasis and Nirmalas were strongly influenced by the traditional Hindu religion especially their philosophical system of Vedanta. Their interpretation sought to erode the distinct identity of the Sikh faith. Some of jealous Hindu preachers of this period also sought to explain Sikhism as a reformed sect within Hinduism. It was feared that Hindu faith being a great absorbent will absorb Sikhism in its fold. Says Sher Singh in this regard: Hinduism as history has shown is so wonderfully tolerant that it, as a new faith becomes a little negligent, at once first recognizes it as its own, then adopts it and in the end devours it.<sup>28</sup> The twentieth century Sikh interpreters made a conscious attempt to preserve and propagate the distinct identity of Sikhism both at the doctrinal as well as practical level. The traditional exegetes of Gurbani used Sanskritized Sadh Bhakha which was difficult for the layman to follow. The twentieth century exegetes used Punjabi which was the language of the common people. Some of these scholars also attempted to explain Gurbani in English language. In this way they were propagating the message of the Sikh Gurus to the world at large.

## V.

The truth of the Scriptures as we all know is the eternal truth. It needs interpretation in order to relate the eternal truth to every historical situation. The twentieth century Sikh scholars were attempting to explain the eternal message of the Gurbani in the context of the first half of the century. These scholars, on the one hand were responding to the Western challenge by interpreting the Sikh doctrines and practices in the light of Western modes of interpretation. They adopted their methodology but

defended the unique features and status of the Sikh religion. On the other hand, they were striving hard to maintain the distinct identity of the doctrine and practice of Sikhism in the face of chauvinistic Hindu designs which sought to disapprove the claim of Sikh religion as a distinct revealed faith. The interpretation of this period thus is continuity as well as a departure from the traditional interpretation. It is continuity as it is based on the eternal message of the Gurbani but it is also a departure as it makes use of the new tools and modes of interpretation to respond to the prevailing challenge to the religion. Taran Singh says that the perusal of literature of this period leads us to conclude that the endeavours of these scholars of this period were departure from the traditional schools of interpretation.<sup>29</sup>

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## EXEGESIS OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB: TRADITIONS AND OUTLOOK

*Dr. Jaswinder Kaur Dhillon &  
Bhai Aridaman Singh Dhillon*

The main problem of exegetics of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is hidden in the following comments of the co-author Dr. Jaswinder Kaur Dhillon, a senior scholar of Philosophy and Sikhism, in her pioneering work on Sikh Axiology (Science of Values) published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar: 'As I have studied Gurbani more and more in its depth, I have developed ever increasing admiration and adoration for its composers. Before this, I could never imagine that this poetry was so full of such lofty philosophical content. Superficial studies or studies purely from the literary aspect can never do full justice to Gurbani. This is how most exegetes have often done great injustice with the meanings of Gurbani. We must not forget that the very basis of religion is either spirituality or ethics; and both these are subjects of philosophy. Therefore, no study of a religion ignoring its philosophical aspect can ever be perfect, especially in case of a philosophy-rich religion like Sikhism.'<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, most of the popular exegesis of Sri Guru Granth Sahib were authored by scholars bereft of any formal education in Philosophy. Their usual apology has been that even the Gurus had no formal education in this subject, but they forget that those days such education was not available in schools and colleges, but from the gurus in *maths*, *mandirs* and *masjids*. Those who have closely followed the lives of the Gurus, and correctly grasped the inner meanings of Gurbani know very well that the Gurus had gone to great lengths to study the philosophies of the prevalent creeds of their times and commented upon them most appropriately. So much so that even the scientific content of Gurbani's philosophy is of much higher order than those of the prevalent creeds, and has solidly stood the scrutiny of the ever expanding scientific knowledge of the modern times.

Gurbani is grounded on the solid foundations laid by the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev ji, who had spent almost half his adult life in traveling far and wide all over Indian sub-continent, and even as far as Sri Lanka, Tibet, Saudi Arabia and Iraq etc. to garner first hand deep knowledge of almost all creedal systems prevailing in Punjab of his days before propounding his own religious philosophy. Most of his successors had carried on his cosmopolitan and open-minded approach in the final product known as the Sikh creed based on the Gurbani authored by them and compiled in Guru Granth Sahib. This strong edifice of Sikh philosophy is further buttressed by the inclusion in it of conforming Banis of more than thirty Hindu and Muslim sages spanning a large spread of territories, centuries, creeds, cultures and languages. This requires good knowledge of all these creeds, cultures, philosophies and languages to fully appreciate the real meanings of Gurbani in all its depth and glory. This is the reason not a single exegetical effort has so far been able to fully satisfy the readers, devotees, scholars or students.

According to Professor Harbans Singh in his *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*,<sup>i</sup> The Guru Granth Sahib is an anthology of spiritual poetry of six of the Gurus and a number of medieval saints as well as of some of the followers contemporary with the first five Gurus. The language used is, by and large, Punjabi or Hindi, not difficult to understand. Yet, because of its poetic form and philosophical content and the linguistic peculiarities bequeathed it by a long range of time and space it spanned, the Spiritual text transmitted to the laity required to be annotated and explained. In consequence arose a whole body of exegetical literature; also several schools of interpretation. The starting point is the corpus itself. Successive Gurus clarified, elaborated and expounded in their own verse the meaning of the compositions they had inherited. The *Janam Sakhis* contain these interpretations clothed in much hagiographical detail. This is especially so in the case of writers attempting to provide a setting and background to the hymns they are expounding. One prominent example is the *Pothi* of Baba Meharban. The writings of Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636) are placed by some in the same category.<sup>ii</sup>

Many scholars consider *Japu ji*, the first Bani of Guru Granth Sahib as the essence or summary of Gurbani and say that most of the rest of *Bani* is more or less an explanation of *Japu ji* and other Banis of Guru



Nanak. Similarly, the writings of Bhai Gurdas, who was the inscriber of the first volume of the Sikh Scripture, are considered as the key to Gurbani. As for the *Janam Sakhis*, these are known to have been the produce of the parallel streams of *gurgaddis* established mostly by the descendents of various Gurus who got sidelined in the choice of the new successor to the mainstream *gurgaddi*. Most *Janam Sakhis* are full of hagiographical accounts of Guru Nanak and some of his successors often attributing miraculous powers to them which are abhorrent to the tenets of Gurbani<sup>3</sup>. Even Baba Miharban belonged to such a stream often known as that of Minas, being the son of Prithi Chand, the eldest son of the fourth Guru Ram Das who was called *ĕminai* (cunning, deceitful) by his father for his jealous conspiracies against his younger brother Arjan, which epithet stuck to his clan for all times to come. Prithi Chand is considered one of the conspirators in the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. With the help of the Lahore Provincial authorities, the Minas had taken possession of the Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar for almost a century after Guru Hargobind Singh was forced to abandon it in 1634 AD.<sup>4</sup> For establishing parallel *gurgaddis*, perpetually creating problems for the mainstream Gurus, and manipulating Gurbani and Gurmat for their benefit, the Sikhs had been ordained not to have any connections with the *Minas*, *Hindalias*, *Dhirmalias* and *Ramraias*.

These parallel streams of *gurgaddis* had done much to pollute Gurbani, *Janam Sakhis*, Sikh rites and rituals, and meanings and explanations of Gurbani. This is the main reason for the growth of widely varying schools of interpretations of Gurbani, especially the growth of the unfortunate trend of hagiographical interpretations of Gurbani often at the cost of truth and truthful interpretations introduced by the parallel Gurus to attract followers and admirers for themselves. Their nefarious efforts were helped by the migration of the mainstream *gurgaddi* to the foothills of Shivalik mountains where it remained confined in Kiratpur, Paonta and Anandpur for almost a century till Emperor Bahadur Shah had transferred the control of Harmandir Sahib from the Minas to the representatives of Mata Sundari ñ Bhai Mani Singh and her adopted son Baba Ajit Singh after the first defeat of Baba Banda Bahadur.

The conception of the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* that the language used in Gurbani is, ìby and large, Punjabi or Hindi, not difficult to understand,

is also not entirely correct. The composers of *Gurbani* had hailed from a very long span of time beginning from the twelfth century (Sant Jaidev) to the seventeenth (Guru Tegh Bahadur) and a very diverse parts of the Indian sub-continent. While Jaidev was from Bengal; and Namdev, Trilochan and Parmanand were from Maharashtra; Kabir, Ramanand, Ravidas, Surdas, and Bhikhan hailed from the Uttar Pradesh; Pipa and Dhanna from Rajasthan; and Sain from Madhya Pradesh. Beni roamed all over and practically belonged to the whole land. Sadhna was a Sindhi. Shaikh Farid, whose ancestors had come to India with Muslim invaders from Arabia, had settled in Punjab. The Sikh Gurus, Baba Sunder, Bhai Mardana and the *Doom* bards Satta and Balwand had also belonged to Punjab.<sup>5</sup> The first four Gurus, and Doods Satta and Balwand had hailed from different parts of Punjab. All of them had also belonged to an era which had lacked efficient means of communications and media like newspapers, radio and television which could bring them in proximity close enough for their cultures and languages to affect each other with the same ease as today. Those were the days when it was said that the language changed every twelve *kos* (24000 *gaz* or yards, approximately 15 miles).

First four Gurus had also come from different cultural and creedal backgrounds, as also most of the other *Banikars*. While the *sants* Jaidev, Namdev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Ravidas, Surdas and most of the bards who find place of honour in Guru Granth Sahib were staunch Hindus, Farid, Bhikhan, Sadhna, Mardana and the bards Satta and Balwand were Muslim ñ Farid and his successors had made great contributions in popularising Islam in Northern India. Even the adherents of Hinduism had belonged to its different creeds like Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, Durga Bhakti, Rama Bhakti, Krishna Bhakti etc.<sup>6</sup> So understandably their language and idiom would vary radically. Therefore, although most linguists hold that the language of *Gurbani* is predominantly medieval Hindi of the Braji variety with variations of Punjabi, in the vocabulary used, a large variety of language-traditions of India are drawn upon.

Most of the language of *Gurbani* is a mixture of different regional languages of the Indian sub-continent, which was used as a sort of *lingua franca* by the religious preachers of different creeds for expression and exchange of views. The modern linguists call it *Sant-Bhasha* (saint-language) or *Sadhukari*.<sup>7</sup> Words or hymns of the following languages are

found in Guru Granth Sahib: Marathi, Gujarati, Avadhi, Eastern Punjabi, Lehandi, Dakhni, Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi, Persian and Arabic. The latter two languages, brought with them by the Muslim invaders and rulers from the west, had passed into familiar popular idiom and were employed by the Gurus to emphasize the universal character of their message, which was directed to the Muslims no less than to the Hindus and others.<sup>8</sup> Persian, anyway, had, since long, acquired the status of being the state language of India. The influence of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsa are also apparent. Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan wrote in Sahskriti even. Beni and Sadhna had also written in Sahskriti as well as in saint-language. The later composers Kabir, Sain, Dhanna, Pipa, Parmanand, Ravidas, Surdas have mostly used the *Sant Bhasha* in their verses. *Sant Bhasha* was first used by Namdev and later on it was used by most of the saint-poets who belonged to different parts of the country. Thus it had become the *lingua franca* of the country in the place of the Apabhramsa.<sup>9</sup>

All these factors have contributed to the complexities of successfully and correctly interpreting the Gurbani. Naturally, no problem would have arisen during the Guru period. During the post-guru medieval period too, interpretation of Gurbani was not much of a problem because the task of interpretation and preaching of Gurbani and management of most Sikh shrines had been entrusted in the hands of Udasis since the time of the fourth Guru Ram Das and to Nirmalas also since the time of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh. They were generally aware of the Guru-period interpretations which were passed on by them by word of mouth or training to their progeny and apprentices. Till then, the things too had not changed much, that is, as far as the language and culture were concerned ñ the change caught speed only after the advent of the Europeans on the scene. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, ñDuring the eighteenth century and up to the early part of the nineteenth, the task of interpreting and preaching the Holy Writ primarily rested with the Udasi and Nirmala schoolmen.ñ<sup>10</sup> No wonder then that the first exegete was an Udasi of this period named Anandghana, who completed his exegesis (*teeka*) of Japu ji in 1795, followed by exegeses of several other Banis. ñHis interpretations are saturated with Upanishadic lore and are densely Vedantic rather than Sikh, and are apparently a conscious reincubation of Hindu ideology in Sikh thinking.ñ<sup>11</sup>

It is also alleged that Nirmala scholars generally echoed the Udasi trend of interpreting Sikh scriptural texts. Bhai Santokh Singh (1788-1843), the most prominent among the Nirmalas, did write his *Garabganjani Tika* in criticism of Anandghanasī interpretations, but he too was found to be writing from within the Hindu framework and representing a deep Brahmanical influence. Besides such *teekas*, annotation of scriptural writings continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century in the form of *prayais* (glossaries) and *koshas* (dictionaries), two prominent illustration being *Granth Guru Giranth Kosh* (1895) and *Prayai Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji De* (1898).<sup>12</sup>

A new phase of exegetical writing began with the advent of Western learning. It was, in fact, a Western scholar, Ernest Trumpp who first took up an end-to-end English translation of the entire Guru Granth Sahib. But Trumpp's scorn for traditional interpretations of the faith and his overt antipathy towards it earned him the reproach of the entire Sikh people. Following the publication of Trumpp's work in 1877, unfinished though it remained, Raja Bikram Singh, ruler of Faridkot (1842-98) and patron of the Amritsar Khalsa Diwan, commissioned a full-scale commentary in Punjabi of Guru Granth Sahib. The first draft prepared by Giani Badan Singh Sekhvan was ready by 1883. It was then revised by a synod of Sikh scholars representing a wide variety of schools of thought current among the Sikhs, with Mahant Sumer Singh of Patna Sahib as chairman. Three volumes were published during the reign of Raja Balbir Singh (1869-1906), and the fourth and final one during the reign of Maharaja Brijinder Singh (1896-1918). Suggestions for further revisions and for the use of standard Punjabi instead of Braj poured in, but the proposed revision never took place.<sup>13</sup>

Due to its language and philosophical approach and content, the so called iSikh schooli mostly based on scholars of modern Punjabi influenced by the style and approach spawned by the Ludhiana Mission which had created the first English-Punjabi dictionary, rejected the *Faridkot Wala Teeka* branding it of Brahmanical approach for which they blamed the *Nirmala* and *Udasi* scholars on the translating board, although as testified by the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, it was finalised by a synod of Sikh scholars representing a wide variety of schools of thought current among the Sikhs, with Mahant Sumer Singh of Patna Sahib as chairman. Led

by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha of *Hum-Hindu-Nahin* fame, Prof. Sahib Singh of *Gurbani Viyakaran* fame, and Bhai Jodh Singh of *Gurmat Nirnay* fame, a new tradition of Sikhism grew up seeking to totally banish any so-called Brahmanical or Vedantic influence on, and content in, the interpretation of Gurbani. With the advent of the Gurdwara Sudhar Movement, also called the Akali Movement, initiated to rid the Sikh shrines from the clutches of the Udasi and Nirmala mahants who were conniving with the English administrators to debase Sikhism and Sikh shrines for feathering their own nests, the Udasis and Nirmalas were almost completely condemned as being more of Hindus than Sikhs.

Under these circumstances, almost each and every exegetic effort post-*Hum-Hindu-Nahin* movement era has not only completely shied of accepting presence of any Traditional Indian concept in Gurbani, but has also grasped every opportunity to introduce any hagiographical or panegyric element possible to eulogise the Gurus, Gurbani and Sikhism, even at the cost of rendering the interpretations incredible and ludicrous for the discernable and the knowledgeable, forgetting the most cardinal tenet of Sikhism : iTruth is the highest, but ethicality is higher still.<sup>14</sup> It is often sad to see a reputable scholar take liberties with the Holy Writ, as the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* calls the Gurbani in reverence, and its interpretation, to achieve his aim. This article does not permit space to point out some of the many glaring instances but we take this opportunity to request the scholars to desist from playing with the words and interpretations of Gurbani.

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3. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, the celebrated scholar and encyclopaedist holds in his *Gurmat Martand*, Part One, SGPC, Amritsar, 1962, pp. 286-87; iMany a history writers, believing Guru Sahib to be a practitioner of miracles against the nature, have written many such anecdotes which appear to be more of vilification than laudation, as can be appreciated from the following hymns:

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਕਰਾਮਾਤਿ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੁਠੈ ਜੋ ਮਿਲੈ॥ ਮਹਲਾ ੨, ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ (੨੩)

ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਖਾਣੁ ਸਭੁ ਬਾਦਿ ਹੈ ਧਿਗੁ ਸਿਧੀ ਧਿਗੁ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ॥

ਸਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਸਾ ਕਰਾਮਾਤਿ ਹੈ ਅਚਿੰਤੁ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸੁ ਦਾਤਿ॥

ਨਾਨਾਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸੈ ਏਹਾ ਸਿਧਿ ਏਹਾ ਕਰਮਾਤਿ॥ ਮਹਲਾ ੩, ਵਾਰ ਸੋਰਠਿ (੨੦)  
 ਸਿਧ ਬੋਲੇ ਸੁਣ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਤੁਹਿ ਜਗ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਦਿਖਾਈ॥  
 ਕੁਝ ਵਿਖਾਲੇ ਅਸਾਨੂੰ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਉਂ ਢਿਲ ਅਵੇਹੀ ਲਾਈ॥

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ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲੇ ਨਾਥ ਜੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਸਚ ਮੁਖਹੂੰ ਅਲਾਈ॥  
 ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੋਰ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਅਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਾਹੀ॥ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ ੧, ਪਉੜੀ ੪੨-੪੩"

4. Prof. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol.III, p.88.
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9. *Ibid.*
10. Prof. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, p.10.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ॥ Guru Granth Sahib, p. 62.

## WESTERN VIEW OF THE SIKH FAITH

*Dr. Darshan Singh\**

Our sources reveal that the Western writers had discovered at an early stage, the close connection between the religion and politics of the Sikhs. Their religion being one of the most potent factor behind their political power. A.L.H. Polier commenting on the origin and increase of the political power of the Sikhs finds religion as the basic inspiration behind it. He says, 'It was not till the reign of Bahadur Shah that they began to appear in arms and endeavoured to shake off their allegiance, at which time under the direction of a new saint, one *Gorou* Gobind, they laid the foundation of a kind of republic, which might prove very formidable to its neighbours, and overwhelm them in the end....'<sup>1</sup> James Browne too has noted that the sect of the Sikhs make 'religion and politics unite in its aggrandizement....'<sup>2</sup> It was, thus, first because of the political concerns of the Britishers and later on after the annexation of the Punjab, because of the administrative necessities that they got interested in the religion of the Sikhs. Since then till 1947, the political concern has remained the main factor in their perspective on the tradition and faith of the Sikhs. Their political involvement in the Sikh faith and tradition should always be kept in mind while taking account of their perspective on the Sikhs. It was perhaps, because of the political reasons that the Western writers repeatedly mentioned a prophecy attributed to Guru Tegh Bahadur, as if it had been one of the fundamentals of the Sikh faith. Later on the virtue of loyalty to the sovereign too came to be added to it.

Concluding his paper on the Sikhs, A.L.H. Polier states, 'I have nothing more to add to this account except a pretended prophecy, which the Sikhs say has been delivered down by some of their *Gorou*, that the Sikhs after remaining sometime the terror of India would at last be finally destroyed by white men coming from the westward. Who are to be those white men, time must discover, but the Sikhs themselves think the Europeans will fulfil the prophecy, and are meant by it.'<sup>3</sup>

M.A. Macauliffe enumerating the advantages of the Sikh religion to the state relates the same prophecy in the following manner supplementing it with one more, supposed to have been made by Guru Gobind Singh: 'One day, as Guru Tegh Bahadur was in the top storey of his prison, the Emperor Aurangzeb thought he saw him looking towards the south in the direction of the Imperial Zenana. He was sent for the next day, and charged with this grave breach of Oriental etiquette and propriety. The Guru replied, 'Emperor Aurangzeb, I was on the top storey of my prison, but I was not looking at thy private apartments or at thy queens. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy pardas and destroy thine empire.' When it was represented to Guru Gobind Singh that a Muhammadan army would eventually come to overpower his Sikhs, he replied, 'What God willeth shall take place. When the army of the Muhammadans cometh, my Sikhs shall strike steel on steel. The Khalsa shall then awake, and know the play of battle. Amid the clash of arms the Khalsa shall be partners in present and future bliss tranquility, meditation, and divine knowledge. Then shall the English come, and joined by the Khalsa, rule as well in the East as in the West. The holy Baba Nanak will bestow all wealth on them. The English shall possess great power and by force of arms take possession of many principalities. The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very powerful, as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the British shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way obtain prosperity. Wherever they take their armies they shall conquer and bestow thrones on their vassals. Then in every house shall be wealth, in every house religion, in every house learning and in every house happiness.'<sup>4</sup> Macauliffe further expresses his regret at the ignorance of these prophecies of the Gurus among the younger generations of the Sikhs. Relating his personal experience he says, 'I have only quite recently met in Lahore young men claiming to be descendants of the Gurus, who told me that they were Hindus, and that they could not read the characters in which the sacred books of the Sikhs were written. Whether the object of their tutors and advisers was or was not to make them disloyal, such youths are ignorant of the Sikh religion, and of its prophecies in favour of the English, and contract exclusive social customs and prejudices to the extent of calling us Malechhas, or persons of impure desires and inspiring disgust for the customs and habits of Christians.'<sup>5</sup>



These lengthy but relevant quotations are ample proof of the presence of a powerful political factor in the Western perspective on the Sikh faith. Their interpretation of the Sikh faith was greatly inspired and conditioned by their own political involvement in the Sikh faith and tradition. Those aspects of the Sikh religion came to be more emphasized which could prove helpful to perpetuate the political hold of the English on the Sikhs, those going against it were either omitted or misrepresented. It was primarily because of the political and later on also because of missionary concerns of the Western writers that Sikhism purposely came to be misrepresented in their works. To A.L.H. Polier, the Sikhs were the terror and plague of this part of India,<sup>16</sup> and to Ernest Trumpp the Sikh scripture incoherent and shallow in the extreme and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover these defects.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Reasons for the Favourable View of the Faith:**

Leaving apart minor deliberate distortions of Sikhism by some Western writers their overall attitude to the Sikhs was much more balanced, reasonable and positive, compared with their attitude towards the religious traditions of the Hindus and the Muslims. One reason for their favourable view of the Sikhs may be that Sikhism being a relatively small community could never present such a powerful and mighty challenge to the Western people as the Muslim or the Hindu communities could have posed. Another reason for the favourable view may be that after their defeat at the hands of the Britishers in 1849, the Sikhs most of the time remained indispensable ally of the English, as far as their military set-up was concerned. But the most important of all the reasons for the favourable Western view of Sikhism was that being a comparatively modern and reformatory religious movement, Sikhism was free from most of those errors and evils which came to be attacked by the Westerners among the Muslims and the Hindus. The Sikh movement thus was already imbued with the reformatory zeal which the Christian missionaries endeavoured to introduce among the Indian religious traditions.

J.N. Farquhar giving the detail of the reforms which the Protestant missionaries sought to introduce in India writes, 'Their study of Hinduism and the Hindu community convinced them that, for the health of the people, many social and religious reforms were necessary, for example, the total abolition of caste, the prohibition of widow-burning, of child-marriage, of

polygamy and of infanticide, the granting of widow of the right to remarry, the prohibition of human sacrifice, of the torturing of animals in sacrifice, of human torture in worship and of the gross obscenity practised in the streets.<sup>18</sup> If we take into account the reforms contemplated by the Protestant missionaries to be introduced among the Hindus, it becomes immediately clear that Sikhism was not only free from these evils but was also vigorously advocating introduction of the reforms centuries before the arrival of the Christian missionaries on the scene. On the basis of the foregoing discussion we may safely maintain that if Sikhism came to be favourably viewed by the Westerners, it was because of the inner purity and the religious merits of the faith and the tradition.

### **Historical and Theological Perspectives:**

Sikhism has been studied and presented by the Western writers against its Indian religious background. They have attempted to interpret its nature in terms of its relation with the earlier religious traditions of India. W. Owen Cole's recently issued book, *Sikhism and Its Indian Context 1469-1708*,<sup>9</sup> is the culmination of this tendency of the Western writers. However, in this work Cole has attempted to explore the attitude of Guru Nanak and early Sikhism to other Indian religious beliefs and practices. It looks back at the Indian tradition from the Sikh perspective but the approach is the same. The work properly belongs to the same method of historical analysis.

The historical method is quite relevant and useful for the proper understanding of any religious tradition. Yet there remains something in the religious traditions which cannot be appropriated by following this approach. The essential teachings of all religions are said to be relevant to all the historical situations. Sikhism viewed from the historical perspective is a movement of reform and reconciliation. It no doubt aimed at reforming the prevalent Indian religious traditions and reconciling the warring traditions of Islam and Hinduism. But the subsequent historical development of the Sikh tradition befittingly demonstrates that it was a movement larger than a mere attempt to reform or reconcile. Most of the Western writers not only presented Sikhism as a movement of reform and reconciliation but also interpreted its beliefs and practices in terms of its above mentioned nature. Interpretation of the Sikh doctrine of God by the various Western authors is an appropriate example of the above mentioned endeavour. The

Sikh idea of God has been interpreted as representing the same conciliatory concerns of the Sikh Gurus. It is represented as an effort to synthesize the Muhammadan and Hindu ideas of God.

In addition to the emphasis on historical analysis, the Westerners' perspective on the Sikh religious beliefs and practices is conditioned by the understanding of their own religious beliefs and practices as explained in the systematic theology. The main emphasis in Sikhism as is now generally understood was more on spiritual discipline than on rational formulations. But the Western writers wanted to understand Sikhism in terms of theology. Their attempt to build the Sikh theology was largely conditioned by their own notion of theology. The very question, 'what is Sikh theology?' was quite foreign to the Sikh self-understanding. Sikhism in its origins was partially a reaction against overworked rational formulations. This should not be understood to mean that Sikhism lacked in theological contents. But the theological expression did not receive the same emphasis in Sikhism as it received in Christianity and in this sense emphasis on theological aspect was a new perspective on the Sikh religion. Majority of the questions raised by the Western writers about Sikhism were inspired in the main by their own Christian theological background. However, they did not enter into making any elaborate comparisons of the Sikh doctrines with their own Christian doctrines. They confined themselves strictly to the Indian religious background while making such comparative remarks about the Sikh doctrines and practices, although it was their own Christian theological background which guided their studies of the Sikh beliefs and practices.

#### **Classicist Predispositions:**

Another characteristic feature of the Western perspective on Sikh faith is its classicist predisposition. Such classicist leanings led the Western writers to trace the original and pure form of the Sikh doctrines in their classical writings. Under this influence they focussed mainly on Guru Nanak to trace the original doctrines of Sikhism. Further by establishing close affinity between Guru Nanak and Kabir they looked for the original pure doctrines of Sikhism in the works of Kabir. This tendency is very much active till today especially in the works of W. H. McLeod. There is no denying the fact that the Sikhs as a religious community owe their origin to Guru Nanak, but this emphasis sometimes leads to undervalue

the importance of later historical manifestations of the spirit of Guru Nanak and these later developments of Sikhism are often sought to be interpreted as deviation from the original teachings of Guru Nanak. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch have emphatically maintained that, the nature and meaning of Protestantism can be seen only in the light of its historical development.<sup>10</sup> The same assumption seems to be relevant to all other religious traditions in general, and to the Sikh religious traditions in particular. The later historical development of Sikhism however, is a natural growth of the spirit, inculcated by Guru Nanak.

#### **Ignorance of the Primary Sources:**

One more point regarding the Western perspective on Sikh faith is that for more than one century the Western writers on Sikhism did not have access to the original sources and that their information in the main came from secondary sources, and in some cases from personal, that is subjective, observations. Trumpp too has noted this limitation of the earlier Western writers on Sikhism. All these authors, he wrote, had not read the Granth themselves, but received the information they gave from second hand; it is, therefore, partly defective, partly labouring under mistakes.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Classification of the Western Writings on Sikhism:**

There are three main categories of the Western writings in which the accounts of the religious beliefs and practices of the Sikhs are to be found. In the first category may be enumerated those works which are devoted to the general survey of Sikh history. Some small papers, articles, sketches, as well as full length histories of the Sikhs form part of this genre of literature. The works of James Browne, A.L.H. Polier, George Forster, John Malcolm, Lt.-Col. Steinbach, W.L. MiGregor, J.D. Cunningham, John C. Archer, Gerald Barrier, etc., belong to this class of writings. Cunningham, however, occupies a very special position among these writers. His *History of the Sikhs*, is a narration as well as an interpretation. It is an interpretation of the Sikh history in terms of the Sikh faith. In these studies brief descriptions of the religious beliefs, practices and institutions of the Sikhs have been included as forming an inseparable part of their history. However, the main concern of these writings remains the narration of Sikh history.

The second category of writings in which the brief accounts of the religion of the Sikhs is preserved are those devoted to the religious history

of India especially those dealing with the late medieval period. The authors of these writings are well versed in the Indian religious thought and practices. The account of Sikhism found in these works is very brief and sketchy and based mainly on secondary sources. But because of the familiarity of these authors with the religious thought and precepts their accounts are relatively more specific and clear. The works devoted to the survey of world religions may also be considered as part of this category, because the authors of these works too have discussed Sikhism as part of the Indian religious tradition. The works of William Ward, H.H. Wilson, Robert Needham Cust, Frederic Pincott, John Campbell Oman, Nicol Macnicol, James Bisset Pratt, H.A. Rose, J. E. Carpenter, J. N. Farquhar, Jack Finegan, John B. Noss, Ninian Smart, etc., may be listed as belonging to this category.

The third category of the writings is that which is primarily devoted to the study and exposition of the Sikh religious ideas and life. The works of Charles Wilkins, Ernest Trumpp, M.A. Macauliffe, C.H. Loehlin, Duncan Greenlees, W.H. McLeod, W. Owen Cole, etc., may be listed in this class of writings. Excepting Wilkins' brief observations these writings are comparatively more detailed and based in the main on the study of the primary sources of Sikhism.

It is pertinent to mention here that the historical aspect of Sikhism has not been omitted here rather due attention has been given to it, in these writings also. History in fact, forms an indispensable part of the Sikh faith. Emphasizing its importance Dorothy Field says, 'The subsequent enmity of the Muhammadans, and the consequent development of martial tendencies on the part of the Sikhs, can only be understood in the light of history....'<sup>12</sup> Greenlees explaining the importance of history in Sikhism maintains, 'The Sikh religion has never been a philosophy of books or theories, but as Mahtab Singh says it is a 'discipline of life', an ideal of brotherhood inspired by passionate devotion to the highest, guided by the example of the Guru's own life, and interpreted in the life history of the Guru Khalsa Panth. Sikh history cannot be divorced from Sikh philosophy; it is its very life blood.'<sup>13</sup> History thus forms an indispensable part of the Sikh spiritual culture and helps to explain and interpret some of the basic issues of the Sikh faith.

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## EXEGETICAL TOOLS FOR THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB

*Dr. Gurnam Singh Sanghera*

Broadly speaking word exegesis means explanation or interpretation of a written text. The purpose is to determine author's intention ñ what the writer (Guru, Sant, Bhagat, Prophet etc.) intends or intended to express; the reader reception ñ how would the author's intended reader understand what he or she was writing. This is intricate in scriptural studies (as in the Bible, the Quran, the Vedas and the Guru Granth Sahib, etc.) due to the worldly, material and cultural gap between the old or medieval text and the modern reader. It need not be mentioned that the scriptural texts have been written in language and idiom in which we may not have sound grounding or may not be very conversant in that wording. People/readers have pre-determined ideas about the meaning of words or texts and the beliefs or imports can/may prejudice their reading.

Though we cannot entirely avoid or get away from our individual, cultural and historic inclination/predilection, but we can strive to be conscious of the impact they have on our understanding - thinking and reading of text or any other literature. The technique of exegesis assists us read and analyze scriptural text (the Guru Granth Sahib) by supplying tools for plodding through the text and also by enhancing consciousness and understanding of the prejudices and partisanship that influence the way we read and analyze the text. So exegesis is a methodical and systematized procedure by which a person can get a well grounded and well reasoned awareness and understanding of the import, interpretation and essence, spirit and meaning of the text of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Before writing about exegetical tools, it must be mentioned that the Guru Granth Sahib, the eternal (*Sabad*) Guru of Sikhs, has a unique position and is possibly the only Scripture in the world which was compiled by one of the Gurus. The Bible was written much later after Christ and the Quran was also written after the death of Prophet Mohammad. The Bible is a library of 66 Books written over a period of 1500 years by many human

authors inspired by God. The Vedas, accepted 'authorless' according to a school in Hinduism, were composed over a long span of time.

Before attending to exegetical tools, it is imperative to mention that the text of the Guru Granth Sahib is authentic as it was compiled by the Gurus. Scriptural reasoning today is dependent upon cultivating truth by weeding out seemingly lot of errors of interpretation and unacceptable distortions. The intellectual process leads to providing an explication of explication by creating a less troublesome and better suited vocabulary that will improve the prospects of rational assessment of the explicit sense of scriptural language. It is important to look into the tradition of scriptural interpretation in order to acknowledge the evolving and developing intellectual process in understanding the revelation that would enable the analyst (commentator) to search for the real intention and contextual importance of the re-contextualized exegesis of the past commentators and exegetes. Such acknowledgement in the developing clearness of meaning also furnishes the analyst, *tika-kar* and interpreter to engage in his own hermeneutics without abandoning some divergent and different readings and ensuring expositions, which are analytically and meticulously examined for their historical value in as much as they disclose the true meaning of the text. Some of the methodologies utilized within traditional approaches in religions stem from Christian scholarship which includes process of categorization, systematization and compartmentalization of traditions that do not reflect daily practices and beliefs of many Sikhs. Sikh belief systems and lived practices fly in the face of the western categorization and systematization. Oral and popular aspects and traditions are ignored or decried by orientalist. But here I am writing about exegetical tools only.

Exegesis is the evaluative and expository elucidation or interpretation of a text. Exegesis is to explore its literary, historical, sociological, religious, and theological facets. Exegesis can be broken down into various steps such as determining the original text, translating the text, determining the contexts (religious, social, literary and historical), establishing the literary forms, logical analysis, synthesis and composition. The principal objectives of exegesis are to explain what the text meant to its original audience and its initial audience and in its primary historical environment/setting and to expound what the text means for today. The following exegetical books assist to achieve the primary goals of exegesis.



### General and Historic Context

Large amount of religious literature has been written with the aim of spreading knowledge about Gurbani among the masses. Many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars have produced research works concerning Sikh Gurus, Bhagats and the Guru Granth Sahib. Some academic books supply information about the subject matter, constitution (composition), history and supremacy of the Guru Granth Sahib. Though Bhai Santokh Singh's *Sri Guru Pratap Suraj Granth*, popularly known as *Suraj Prakash* and Giani Gian Singh's *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* and *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* are popular and have a place in Sikh psyche, but the inception of historical studies of Gurbani is tracked down to Prof. Sahib Singh who initiated his research on the subject in 1946 and his book, *Adi Bir Baare* was published by Punjab Languages Department in 1971. It is said that Prof. Sahib Singh had input from the writings of Giani Gian Singh, Bhai Santokh Singh and *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*. Prof. Sahib Singh consulted and depended upon traditional sources such as *Janam-Sakhis* etc. to erect his historical paradigm of Gurbani composition. Dr. Charan Singh, concentrating upon *raga* system of Gurbani, wrote *Bani Beora* in 1902. Kesar Singh Chhibar's *Bansawalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* is quite well known but its mentioning of 1601 as the year of compilation and installation of Adi Granth (*Pothi Sahib*) had created controversy. So Giani Mahan Singh, editor of *Khalsa Samachar* argued that 1604 was the accurate year and he produces his book, *Param Pavittar Adi Bir Da Sankalan Kal*, about the making of the Adi Granth in 1954. Surinder Singh Kohli's, *A Critical Study of Adi Granth* (1961) provided modern models of research about Gurbani. Dr. Mohinder Kaur Gill wrote book, *Guru Granth Sahib di Sampadan Kala*, concerning the composition of the Guru Granth Sahib. Piara Singh Padam penned *Sri Guru Granth Parkash*, which included an introduction, an analytical section and philosophical aspect of Gurbani. Dr. Ganda Singh (*Guru Gobind Singh's Death at Nanded: An Examination...*) and Giani Bhagat Singh Heera (*Guru Maneo Granth*) wrote about the Guru-status of the Guru Granth Sahib (*Sabd Guru*). Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi wrote, *Sri Guru Granth Prichay*, a helpful and convenient book for students of Gurbani.

### Manuscripts (*Puratan Biran*):

The word *manuscript* is derived from the Latin *manu scriptus*, means hand written. This can be written, recorded, scratched or chiselled,

etc. Information has travelled through generations in various ways. Initially it was passed on orally which later on took the form of scribal tradition of hand written recordings. The print invention/ technology took over from the manuscripts to allow mass production. Eventually electronic medium has revolutionized the process. Manuscripts could be in the form of loose papers bound or in codex format. Manuscripts are treasure of literature and are the mirror of the age as they encompass culture, art, history, language and socio-politico-economic environment of the time.

The word *ĕpuratan biri* is applied for old manuscripts of the Guru Granth Sahib. The most important and accepted is the *Sri Adi Bir* or *Kartarpuri Bir*. *Bhai Banno Wali Bir* includes some extra writings. The third one is labeled as *Lahore Wali Bir*. Some scholars study the method of editing and are endeavouring the make or model for the alleged ĕvolution of Gurbani textí. Mostly scholars study the text and attempt to differentiate the particular manuscripts from the definitive and standard printed one. Basic and primary information concerning *bani* manuscripts stored in various library collections is found in catalogues published by the linked/ associated institutions. Shamsheer Singh Ashok compiled *Punjabi Hath-likhtan di Suchi* and Christopher Shackle published ĕCatalogue of the Punjabi and Sindhi Manuscripts in the India Office Library, London. Lot of attention has been paid to the authenticity of the pre-Kartarpuri Bir manuscripts ĩ *Ahiyapur Wali Pothi* and *Pinjore Wali Pothi* . *Rahitnama* of Chaupa Singh, Bhai Santokh Singhís and Giani Gian Singhís writings, *Mahima Prakash* etc. allude to the existence of Gurbani manuscripts. G.B. Singh, in *Prachin Biran*, writes about Gurbani manuscripts. Prof. Sahib Singh and Prof. Teja Singh did research on this subject and both are of the opinion that the compilation of *bani* started with Guru Nanak Dev. Bhai Jodh Singh composed his book, *Prachin Biran Bare* in 1945. He had investigated and studied the contents of Kartarpuri Bir and composed another book *Kartarpuri Bir de Darshan*. Books by some authors, concerning this topic raised controversies but Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon questioned the authority of GNDU-MS#1245 very convincingly, which can be studied in his book, *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*. Dr. Gurinder Singh Mannís *The Goindwal Pothis; the Earliest Extant Sources of the Sikh Cannon* and Prof. Pritam Singhís (Ed.), *Ahiyapur Wali Pothi*, Vol-I are about *Puratan Biran* but Dr. Mann

accepts Guru Arjan Devís borrowing the *Pothis* from Baba Mohan whereas Prof. Pritam Singh holds that the above theory is highly questionable.

### **Commentaries:**

Commentaries can be either on the entire scripture or on the compositions of an individual Guru or Bhagat or on an individual text. Commentaries (can) reflect the methodological and theological biases or subjectivity of the commentator (*tika-kar*) and should always be used with care and effort, and intention should be to be objective. One should consult more than one commentary before writing or articulating oneís own commentary. Interpretation of Gurbani is a significant aspect of the Sikh tradition. Gurbani interpretation has four techniques: *tika*, *viakhia*, *bhashya* and *paramarth*. A *tika* (commentary) explains the meaning of a specific hymn or composition in a simple language. *Viakhya* provides extensive commentary of a hymn. *Paramarth* explains spiritual meanings of mystic/spiritual and theological word (idiom) or term located in the Guru Granth Sahib. *Bhashya* tries to explain hard terms found in the Guru Granth Sahib. There are various traditions and techniques for interpretation and commentary (*tika-kari* or *viakhia*). Dr. Taran Singh has described various types of schools of Gurbani interpretation. Dr. Piar Singh is not in agreement with Taran Singh and mentions three techniques ñ traditional (*Sampardai Parnali*), brahminical (*Shashtri parnali*) and modern (*Adhunic school*).

*Tika-kari* (Commentaries or hermeneutics) existed during the times of Gurus. There is intra-dialogue in the Guru Granth Sahib and that can be termed as explanation or elaboration of a view as Christopher Shackle states that Faridís verses (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1384) give images of power and beauty ibut these individual beauties are encompassed by a certain emotional constriction, from whose gloomy appeal it is with a sense of entering the sunlight that we may turn to the very different atmosphere created by Guru Nanakî ( p.74). Giani Badan Singh drafted the first full scale commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib in 1883, which is popularly known as *Faridkoti Tika*. A committee of Udasi, Nirmala Mahants and other scholars published revised commentary, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Steek*, which was published in 1918. Giani Narain Singh of Lahore composed a commentary in 1940. It had Nirmala *parnali* effect. Giani Bishan Singh completed his eight-volume commentary, *Tika Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in 1945. *Shabadarth Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (4 volumes) with meanings of difficult words was the joint work of Prof. Teja Singh, Bawa Harkishan

Singh and Prof. Narain Singh.

Bhai Vir Singh's commentary is unique and he supplied a superb amalgam of the four methods of interpretation incorporating *tika*, *shabadarth*, *viakhya* and *nirukat*. His technique was to examine the meaning of every verse in the context of the whole hymn. He worked on his *Santhya Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which was published in seven volumes after his death. Prof. Sahib Singh has given us an excellent commentary, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan* in 10 volumes. His linguistic knowledge and Gurbani grammar empowered him to provide an authentic commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib.

Giani Kirpal Singh wrote ten volume *Sampardai Sateek Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji di* which contains *Janam Sakhis* and other stories associated with Gurbani. Giani Mani Singh, former head Granthi of Sri Harmandir Sahib, authored *Sidhantik Sateek Sri Guru Granth Sahb Ji: Prashan ñ Uttar Vikas*, which supplies questionñanswer on several postulates of Gurbani. Giani Harbans Singh's massive commentary, *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darshan Nirnai Sateek: Tulnatmik Adhyani*, in 14 volumes, is not considered comparative.

### **Translations:**

Translations render an indispensable help/assistance by furnishing text of the Guru Granth Sahib into other modern languages. Translations exhibit a heterogeneity of techniques, practices and doctrinal (theological) tilt and it is most prudent to (always) refer to or consult at least two-three different translations of any specific passage (or *bani* or of the whole text under examination). Translators must have full grasp of all aspects of both languages (translated from- Gurbani or-and translated into ñ English, German, Hindi, Tamil etc.). One must be aware of many other hurdles and challenges, but those issues are not the part of this paper.

A good number of works on Gurbani and the Sikh history have been written in or translated into English. Initially, Ernest Trumpp, a German scholar had made an attempt to translate the Guru Granth Sahib in English but he could not complete. In the process, he annoyed and angered Sikhs by his denigrating remarks against the Sikh Scripture and by his biased approach. Max Arthur Macauliffe, to soothe the injured psyche of the Sikhs and also to conciliate, composed monumental work, *The Sikh Religion* about the Sikhs and translated Gurbani along with it. His translation is still quoted by many scholars. Dorothy Field also did justice to the Sikhs by

writing her book, *Religion of the Sikhs*.

Bhai Jodh Singh carried forward Prof. Teja Singh's work of interpretation and produced a standard work on Sikh philosophy *Gurmat Nirnay*. Khazan Singh, Sardool Singh Kavishar, Sher Singh, Avtar Singh etc. authored books on philosophy of Sikh religion. Scholars and students have varied opinions regarding English translations of the Guru Granth Sahib but I will just narrate their names (as I am not evaluating these works in this paper). Dr. Gopal Singh's English translation of the Guru Granth Sahib was published in four volumes (1960). Manmohan Singh's translation (1962-1969) contains Gurbani, its meaning in simple Punjabi prose and translation in simple English and for that reason, it has been used by many students and scholars. Dr. Gurbachan Singh Talib translated the Guru Granth Sahib in English in four volumes (1984-1991). His English and style are different from Dr. Gopal Singh. Pritam Singh Chahal has English translation in four volumes with romanized transliteration which aids reader in pronouncing Gurbani. Gurbachan Singh Makin's five volume translation (2003) contains insight into the content/core of each *pauri* and seems to have strived to assemble/write an English commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib. Sant Singh Khalsa has made his translation and it is available in the Gurbani-CD of Kulbir Singh Thind and on line. Some scholars have translated the Guru Granth Sahib in French (Dr. Jarnail Singh), in Spanish (Gurdev Singh Khalsa), in Thai language (Jaspal Kaur) and in Sindhi (Dada Chela Ram).

### **Concordance/Linguistics:**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib has loads of Punjabi and Hindi dialect forms and words from Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit loan words confined (localized) form and in indigenous terms. It is main/primary facility/asset to study the origin and history of Punjabi language. Understanding the language and grasp the meaning of words (individually and in context) are essential to discern or to attempt to apprehend Guru's words and teachings in a real and genuine way.

Dr. Harnam Singh Shan authored *Guru Granth Sahib di Koshkari* and he mentions that he saw a manuscript titled *Grammar of the Adi Granth* (written by Ernest Trumpp) in Munich State Library. Christopher Shackle's *A Glossary of Guru Nanak* and *An Introduction to the sacred language of the Sikhs* are useful tools for understanding Gurbani. Principal Teja Singh's *Shabadarth Laga-Matran de Gujjhe Bhed* describes the

significance of Gurmukhi vowels and is a tool for understanding the scriptural text. Prof. Sahib Singh, the ěPanini of the Sikhsí wrote complete grammar of Gurbani. Dr. Harkirat Singh has produced Gurbani *di Bhasha te Vyakaran* which gives out the vista about the evolution of the Gurbani language and focuses on the pronunciation, sound and understanding of vowels. Joginder Singh Talwaraís Gurbani *da Saral Vyakaran Bodh* is considered the encyclopadia of Gurbani language.

*Gurmukhi* scriptís origin, evolution and history can provide deep understanding about the changing patterns and meanings with the passage of time and changing objective material conditions. Tarlochan Singh Bediís *Gurmukhi Lipi da Janam te Vikas* supplies knowledge- based organized study of Gurmukhi. Sizeable sections of Gurbani literature are appraised as earliest forms of Punjabi writing. It was Dr. Gopal Singh who ventured to write an intellectual literary examination of Gurbani in his work, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib di Sahitak Visheshta*. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha wrote *Guru Shabad Alankar* in 1923. Dr. Taran Singhís book, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib da Sahitak Itihas* appeared in 1963.

### **Handbooks:**

Handbooks are customarily one volume reference to varied facets of the scriptural texts such as ěwhoís whoí or important places etc. Occasionally, they present some common or popular remarks on the text themselves. Many books about different Bhagats have been composed. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam wrote about the thoughts of each Bhagat. Bhai Santokh Singh, in his *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, opines about Bhagatsí composition recording in the Guru Granth Sahib. Piara Singh Padam provided small biographical details of Bhagats in his *Adi Granth Darshan*. Dr. Charan Singh supplies fascinating details regarding Gurbani *ragas*. Gobind Singh Mansukhaniís *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kirtan* is a preliminary study (and is online). Dr. Gunam Singh has written comprehensive articles on the 31 main *ragas* of Gurbani.

### **Dictionaries and Word Books:**

Gurbani glossaries are early dictionary and concordance writings. *Kosh-kari* (lexicography) has been a component of the Sikh convention and practice. Dr. Harnam Singh Shan has furnished comprehensive study of informative and reference literature concerning Gurbani in *Guru Granth*



*Sahib di Koshkari*. The *Prayayes* (synonyms) are arranged in the order they are evident in the Guru Granth Sahib. So readers can study Gurbani and look at the meanings of hard words in the order they are in Gurbani. Bhai Daya Singh published his glossary in 1887, Sant Sute Parkash published his glossary in 1898 and Bhai Sham Singh's *Paryaye Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* was produced in 1936. Sadhu Bishan Das Udasi and Gurmukh Singh Nirmala also published their works in this genre. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam's *Guru Girarath Kosh* is considered the first complete dictionary of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Piara Singh Padam's *Guru Granth Vichaar Kosh*, Dr. Gurcharan Singh's *Sri Guru Granth Kosh* and Surinder Singh Kohli's *Dictionary of Guru Granth Sahib* are very useful and are available. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's *Mahan Kosh* is considered the best reference work about the Sikh/Gurbani literature. Special dictionaries concerning Gurbani are available in academic institutions. Word books provide various meaning of words and give essential background for the use of that word. Dr. Balbir Singh's *Nirukat Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (in two volumes) is a magnificent etymological dictionary.

#### **Encyclopaedias:**

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's *Mahan Kosh* is a standard reference book. Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi's *Guru Granth Vishav Kosh* a broad ranging, all encompassing and compendious is contemplated as another milestone in lexicographic domain. Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara's *Gurbani da Saral Vyakaran Bodh* is considered no less than an encyclopaedia of Gurbani language. *Tuk Tatkara* has all Gurbani words/index to locate verse (*tuk/line*) in the Guru Granth Sahib.

#### **Atlases:**

A good atlas is vitally important for envisaging/envisioning where a specific site is situated or where a certain event took place. One can imagine or build a picture in the mind's eye. Many atlases provide exhaustive sketch or portrait of the movement of individuals or groups of people. A good overview of the world at a certain point in time can be obtained by looking at and discussing maps. So atlases about the travels of Guru Nanak, travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and travels of Guru Gobind Singh could be great exegetical tools.

#### **Archaeological Summaries:**

These can help one to see what Gurus and Bhagats related sites

might have looked like at a specific period in time or underline or highlight significant worldly/physical attributes of a site that may be relevant for understanding the Gurbani. Even vital archaeological data can be found in encyclopaedias and dictionaries. Various Sikh historic *gurdwaras*, village sites/houses/buildings are great sources/tools.

### **Resources:**

Various excellent resources concerning the Guru Granth Sahib and Gurus are available on the internet and in CDs, DVDís and USBs. *Ik Onkar Bani System* (developed in 1990s) has full text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, with capacity to explore meanings of every word in Punjabi. New CDs of Manmohan Singhís English translation, Prof Talibís English translation and Sant Singh Khalsaís English translation are obtainable. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabhaís *Mahan Kosh*; *Varan Bhai Gurdas*; *Tuk Tatcara of Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and Prof. Sahib Singhís *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan* are available on the internet and in C.D. form. The eGurbani Research CD. Rom is an advanced search engine for Gurbani. The *Sikhi to the Max* Gurbani Searcher software has advanced search engine and its software furnishes an offline version as well. Another online source, *Isher Micro Media* has loads of Gurbani literature. Dr. Kulbir Singh Thindís *Sri Granth.org* has most modern tools to search Gurbani, to do cross referencing to read Gurmukhi and English translations, and also advanced research facilities are obtainable/accessible on this website.

A good deal of work and research have been done and scholarsí diligent work habits have produced appreciable and substantial material. Still lot of research, initiative and creativity are required to excel scholars of other religions. The globalized situation requires de-colonized Sikh scholars to create more qualitative work in English as well. Three cheers for the accomplishments but get inspired and empowered from the previous work and move forward as diasporic Sikhs and non-Punjabi speaking people are eager to learn more about the Sikhs and their scripture. Globalization has enhanced trans-continental migrations which has forced or made diverse people to live next door to each other and converse and mix with each other. Advancing multi-culturalism has increased earnestness among other communities to learn about other religions and especially Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism. So it is the responsibility of Indiaís Sikh scholars (and also of diaspora Sikh scholars) to take initiatives to produce more qualitative literature about Gurbani and Sikhism.



## APPROACHES TO THE EXEGESIS OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

*Dr. Hardev Singh Virk*

### **Introduction:**

The Guru Granth Sahib is a sacred Scripture of the world and is the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs. Because it is a Scripture suitable to a universal religion, many world class philosophers and holy men consider it a unique treasure and a noble heritage for all humankind. Because, it is the Guru of the Sikhs, its adoration or veneration is an article of faith with the Sikhs. In 2008, the Sikhs celebrated the Tercentennial of the Canonization of the Granth as the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

In mystic hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib the appeal of the numinous becomes ineffable, if not inexplicable. And yet the great Sikh Scripture is not a knot of metaphysical riddles and abstract theorizing. For the most part it employs the idiom of the common people, and draws its imagery and metaphors from the home, the street and the work-place. The hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib show an admirable use of the current figures of speech apart from their metrical richness and sweetness. Imagery was taken from everyday life and common occurrence to simplify subtle thoughts and profound concepts. The Gurus were keen lovers of nature and as such have written glowing descriptions of panoramic environmental beauty, changes in the times of day, and the changes of seasons to inculcate love for the One Creator. Thus they make the verses of the Guru Granth Sahib an extraordinary breed of divinity, mysticism, immediacy, concreteness and urgency with which it touches the human heart.<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest glories of the Guru Granth Sahib is its all-embracing character. It is a Scripture completely free from bias, animus and controversy. Indeed, the uniqueness of the Guru Granth Sahib in this respect is all the more astonishing when we think of the obscurantism, factionalism and religious fanaticism of the period in which it was composed.

They were all counter balanced by inclusion of the songs and verses of a wide diversity of holy men, saints, savants and bards. Of course, their hymns and couplets rendered in their own language and idiom were so dovetailed as to find a complete correspondence with themes or motifs in the compositions of the Sikh Gurus.

### **The Exegesis of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and its Importance:**

According to Gurnek Singh, 'The religion is based on the experience of the metaphysical reality, i.e. God or Numinous.'<sup>2</sup> This experience is the result of the direct encounter or the communication with this reality. As a consequential effect it comes down to us through non-rational media, i.e. the intuition which is beyond intellectual understanding and comprehension. So being the product of direct vision of the ultimate reality, i.e. God, it is intellectually both unapproachable and intelligible because the language through which the bani or revelation is coming down to humanity is most of the time symbolic, metaphorical and allegorical. Man's mental encounter with his surroundings result in expression of his feelings. It was and is always in local language such as English, Sanskrit, Pali, Punjabi and Arabic etc. Human being deals with this phenomenal existence and that is why his/her expression is easily comprehensible. But the category which is non-mundane, which is non-rational, i.e. divine or intuitional is beyond proper intellectual comprehension.

So viewed thus the term exegesis or interpretation or exposition is of great eminence, for it unfolds the hidden, i.e. esoteric meanings or message of Scripture. Otherwise the scriptural message would be beyond the comprehension of a layman as well as a scholar. So to impart the message to the people in general, and the scholars in particular, the endeavours have been made to decode both literal as well as esoteric message enshrined in the Scripture to the people at large.

Viewed thus the exegesis of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is of great import because its message from the philosophical, theological and sociological points of view will enhance the comprehension and understanding of man. For the philosophical, theological and sociological comprehension and its implications and concepts shall certainly lead man to imply the Sikh thought on mundane level consequently building and establishing the better world wherein peace, happiness and prosperity shall reign supreme and in this

way in the words of Guru Arjan, the Halemi Raj shall be established, wherein peace shall prevail and trials and tribulations shall cease to be operative. In this way pragmatic aspect will benefit more. The better social order shall come into existence which shall provide the chance to humanity to live peacefully and happily. In this way scriptural message shall help to decrease the sufferings of people and will lead them to establish a beautiful world worth living. That is why the above mentioned tool namely, exegesis has been used and implied to decode the message of the Scripture. It has been used in various religious traditions such as Tafsir in Islamic tradition, Exegesis in Christianity and Tika or Parmarth in Sikh Tradition has been employed for this purpose. Thus from the preceding discussion we have established a point that the exegesis carries weight and is of great eminence in decoding the divine message enshrined in the Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Origin and Approaches to Exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib:**

It is often said that the interpretation of a Scripture begins soon after its compilation. The same is true in the context of the Guru Granth Sahib also. For the true interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism, the Sikh Gurus themselves have explained how to understand and interpret the bani or its belief system. It is evident from the Sikh history that the most important school of interpretation originated in the lifetime of the Gurus themselves. The first effort to interpret the Gurbani besides the Gurus was made by Bhai Gurdas. It is said that when the Guru Granth Sahib was installed in the Harimander Sahib, the practice of exposition of Gurbani was started. Since then, the tradition of interpretation continued in one form or the other.<sup>3</sup>

There is no historical evidence that the Guru Granth Sahib was interpreted in the common language of the masses during the Guru period. However, there is a strong oral tradition that the katha of scriptural hymns was held regularly in major Gurdwaras/Dharamsalas during and after the Guru period. It is part of recorded history that Guru Gobind Singh anointed *Pothi Sahib* as *Sabad Guru* of the Sikhs, a day before his demise at Nanded. This recension of the Guru Granth Sahib was prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the direction of Guru Gobind Singh at Talwandi Sabo (Damdama Sahib), and it is popularly known as the *Damdami Bir*. The Guru Granth Sahib was interpreted for the benefit of Sikh Sangat at Damdama Sahib by tenth Master himself. Baba Deep Singh was working

as a scribe at Damdama Sahib under the tutelage of Guru Gobind Singh and the origin of Damdami Taksal is ascribed to him. Thus, in the Sikh tradition the roots of Sikh exegesis are traced back to Damdama Sahib.

During the eighteenth century and up into the early part of the nineteenth, the task of interpreting and preaching the message of the Guru Granth Sahib primarily rested with the Udasi and Nirmala teachers.<sup>4</sup> Even in the worst days of Mughal persecution they were left unmolested and in control of Sikh shrines and institutions; this continued during the time when the Sikhs had established authority in the Punjab. All instruction was carried out orally. The majority of writings of this period were the Rahitnamas which were, strictly speaking, rules of conduct rather than works of exegesis. The first Udasi exegete of this period who left a written record of his scriptural studies was Anandghana, who completed his tika of *Japu* in 1795, followed by exegesis of several other banis. Anandghana was the first to separate historical account from interpretative comment. His interpretations are saturated with Upanishadic lore and are densely Vedantic rather than the Sikh, and are apparently a conscious re-incubation of Hindu ideology in Sikh thinking.

The Nirmala scholars generally echoed the Udasi trend of interpreting the Sikh scriptural texts in the inflated style prescribed by the Hindu commentators on Upanishadic and Vedic texts. Bhai Santokh Singh (1788-1843), the most prominent among the Nirmalas, did write his *Garabganjani Tika* (Tika to humble the *garab*, i.e. pride of Anandghana) in criticism of Anandghana's interpretation of *Japu*, but he too was writing from within the Hindu framework and relected a deep Brahmanical influence. Besides *tikas*, annotation of scriptural writings continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century in the form of *Prayai* (glossaries) and *Kosh* (dictionaries), two prominent examples being *Guru Granth Girarath Kosh* (1895) and *Prayai Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji De* (1898) by Pandit Tara Singh Narotam.

A new phase of exegetical writing began when the western scholar, Ernest Trumpp began his English translation of the Guru Granth Sahib. But Trumpp's scorn for traditional interpretations of the faith, and his overt antipathy towards it, earned him the reproach of the entire Sikh people. Following the publication of Trumpp's work in 1877, unfinished though it remained, Raja Bikram Singh, ruler of Faridkot (1842-98) and patron of

the Amritsar Khalsa Diwan, commissioned a full scale commentary in Punjabi on the Guru Granth Sahib. The first draft prepared by Giani Badan Singh of Sekhwan was ready by 1883. It was then revised by a synod of Sikh scholars representing a wide variety of schools of thought then current among the Sikhs, with Mahant Sumer Singh of Patna Sahib as chairman. The revision was completed during the time of Raja Bikram Singh, but he did not live long enough to see publication of the work he had sponsored. The printing started during the reign of his successor, Raja Balbir Singh (1869-1906). Three volumes came out during his time and the fourth and final one during the reign of his successor, Maharaja Brijindar Singh (1896-1918). By this time the first edition had already run out. A large number of the sets had been presented free of cost to Gurdwaras and to scholars. The rest were sold at a nominal price.

Meanwhile, suggestions for further revisions and for the use of standard Punjabi instead of Braj in the exegesis had been pouring in from various Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans. The Maharaja ordered, in August 1918, the formation of a revision committee and, pending the revision, ordered the publication of a second edition to meet the immediate demand. However, his untimely death a few months later (22 December 1918) upset the entire plan. The proposed revision never took place, though a second edition did appear in 1924. Maharaja Brijindar Singh's successor Raja Harindar Singh was averse to the idea of a revision. He used to say that the *tika* had been commissioned by his ancestors and it must remain in the same form and style in which they had left it. The original copy of the *tika* is still preserved in the *toshakhana* of the late Raja. There have, however, been reprints of the original published by the Languages Department (*Bhasha Vibhag*) Punjab, the first one in the series appearing in 1970.

Gurnek Singh has discussed the various approaches to Sikh exegesis in his wonderful paper. He has covered all works of Western scholars starting from Colonel A.L.H. Polier right up to W.H. McLeod and other Sikh scholars. He has made an elaborate study of their writings about the Sikh faith. He has praised M.A. Macauliffe for his interpretation of message of the Sikh Gurus in the most appropriate way: 'Macauliffe observed many moral and political merits in the Sikh religion. It does not allow idolatry, hypocrisy, caste, exclusiveness, the cremation of widows,

the immurement of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimages to the sacred rivers and tanks of the Hindus. He was of the opinion that the Sikhs are not the Hindus. Thus he opposed to the idea of the Sikhs being declared to be Hindus because this idea was in direct opposition to the teachings of the Gurus. Thus in many ways Macauliffe's work on interpretation of Sikhism was positive and it displaced Trumpp's for the non-Sikh scholars as well.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Critique of Sikh Exegesis:**

Dr. Taran Singh has given different modes of the interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib in his book.<sup>5</sup> There have been a progressive and continuous change in style of interpretation with the change in time and space. Different Schools of interpretation have been enumerated in this book. One may recall that Guru Gobind Singh deputed five learned Sikhs to study Sanskrit at Benares (Kashi). On return, they were called Nirmalas (or the pure ones) and they set up a School of interpretation, known as Nirmala School. The best representative of this school is Pandit Tara Singh Narotam. He wrote about a dozen books and is acknowledged as the first exegete of the Guru Granth Sahib. However, his interpretation of Gurbani is based on the Vedas, Puranas and other Hindu texts.

In his *tikas*, Narotam quotes from the Vedas, the Puranas, the Mahabharata and other Hindu Scriptures to prove his point of view. Further Narotam advocates the wearing of the traditional religious symbols of the Hindus, such as *tilak*, *mala*, the sacred thread, etc. and asserts that it is in accordance with Gurbani principles. He is the first scholar to have attempted to write the *tika* of the whole Guru Granth Sahib but could not complete it. He could complete it only up to the Sri Rag. Narotam's important work in the direction of Gurbani exegesis is *Sri Gurmati Nirnay Sagar*. It helps one to understand the Sikh philosophy and the ideas enunciated therein are of great import. Had its language not been so archaic and difficult, it would have been of immense academic value.

The *tikas* attempted prior to the twentieth century were coloured with the Vedantic interpretation. The exegetes while attempting *tikas* used to do this in the light of the ancient Indian religious lore. As a learned interpreter of Gurbani, Tara Singh Narotam opines that an exegete can give several meanings to a single line in the course of his explanation. It

is not a demerit but a merit of the exegete. The practice of giving more than one meaning was in vogue both in the Niramala and Giani schools of interpretation. Even today Gianis give several meanings of a word and a line. The method was employed just to prove one's scholarship. In this process sometimes the structure of the words was distorted to grind out more than one meaning.

During the Singh Sabha phase of scriptural interpretation appeared the Sikh scholars, namely Bhai Vir Singh, Professor Puran Singh, Kahn Singh Nabha, Teja Singh, Sahib Singh and Bhai Jodh Singh. Bhai Kahn Singh published, *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh* in 1930. He also published *Gurmat Prabhakar* and *Ham Hindu Nahin*. In the last one he established that Sikh religion is an independent religion. He systematically proved that Sikhism is not a part of Hinduism or a product of Hinduism.

The work of interpretation of the Sikh Scriptural writings was carried forward by Prof. Teja Singh. His most scholarly work is *Shabadarth Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. Bhai Jodh Singh wrote his book, *Gurmat Nirnai* to interpret the message of Sikh Gurus in the context of modern scientific terms. Professor Puran Singh also contributed to the Sikh exegesis in his liberal translation of some Gurbani texts. Professor Puran Singh lamented that due to Brahmanical environment, the Guru's message has been misinterpreted: it is to be regretted that Sikh and Hindu scholars are interpreting Guru Nanak in the futile terms and dissecting texts to find the Guru's meaning to be same as of the Vedas and Upanishads. This indicates enslavement to the power of Brahmanical traditions.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Joginder Singh has mentioned five major Schools of Sikh exegesis in his Ph.D. thesis published in 1981.<sup>7</sup> He categorizes these as follows: School of Miharban; School of Udasis; School of Nirmalas; School of Gianis, and School of Modern Scholars, with their names listed under the Singh Sabha phase. Recently, a new School of Scientists has appeared on the horizon of Sikh exegesis. The present author made his first attempt in interpreting the Sikh Cosmology in view of modern scientific theories, for example, Big Bang Cosmology.<sup>8-10</sup> D.S. Chahal, Director Institute for Understanding Sikhism, Laval, Canada, claims to interpret Gurbani, or Nanakian Philosophy, scientifically and logically.<sup>11</sup> There are some other scientists in Sikh Diaspora and in India who are contributing to this new School of Sikh exegesis.



It is a well known fact that Science and Mysticism are two different modes of experiencing the Reality. While science lays stress on empirical facts and experimentation, mysticism relies more on intuition and transcendental experience. Gurbani belongs to the realm of spirituality as Guru Nanak proclaims that he preaches what he experiences in his mystic reveries. There is already a difference of opinion between Sikh theologians and Sikh scientists on the exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib in modern scientific context. In my personal view, a dialogue between Science and Sikh religion is need of the hour. We must promote Sikh religion and the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib globally using modern communication skills at our disposal. It is almost a revelation for me that using Google, I found more than 8 lakh entries on the theme 'Exegesis of Guru Granth Sahib'!

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## **SIKH EXEGESIS: CONTRIBUTION OF PROF. SAHIB SINGH**

*Dr. Dharam Singh*

Exegesis is a Greek word which literally means to 'lead out', and it has generally been used in the sense of explanation and exposition of a text, especially the religious/scriptural text. The Scripture is an attempt to put in a mundane language and in a particular spatio-cultural context what has been revealed to a preceptor or prophet. In other words, the preceptor's experience of the Numinous, which also happens to be the fount of a religion, becomes the content of a Scripture. Since this experience is subjective and mystical in nature, a number of signs, symbols and myths are woven in the expression. It becomes difficult for a lay reader to comprehend the true meaning of these symbols and metaphors for various reasons. This calls for the need of exegesis to explore and explain, in a simple idiom, the inner content of the given text so as to discover its significance and relevance.

The job of exegesis is rather tough and it demands of an exegete to be a master of multi-dimensional knowledge. He should possess knowledge in several other disciplines also apart from being proficient in the one to which the given text belongs. He must also have very good knowledge of the language in which it is written besides being well conversant with its different dialects as well as some other languages, especially the ones in use in the region at the time when the concerned work was written. The authors often use words and concepts from other languages to stress a point or make the meaning of a certain word clearer. Connotations of many words also change with the passage of time. One must also have the right knowledge and understanding of the socio-cultural and historical situation of the day any out-of-context explanation can produce a serious and avoidable *faux pas*.

## II

The history of the exegesis of Sikh Scripture is almost as old as the scripture itself: the first attempt at exegesis of the scriptural hymns is found in the scripture itself. The Sikh tradition strongly believes that Guru Nanak received the revelation which he then put to pen. There are also several references in the Scriptures which are indicative of the revelatory nature of all the compositions included therein. Being revelatory, all the compositions contain subjective mystical experiences of their respective authors. Later on many savants and scholars, coming from different backgrounds, have also tried their hand on the exegesis of the scriptural hymns with a view to understand and unravel the mystery of this experience, to explore and explain the message contained therein. Accepting the revelatory nature of the scriptural contents, the modern-day exegetes have limited themselves to giving only the word-meaning and paraphrasing the verses: 'they try to find the meanings of words and resolution of any other issues from within the text itself, making the minimum possible intrusion in the text'.

Of course, there was among the earlier exegetes a tendency to see the Sikh Scripture as a continuation of the revelatory literature in India, an extension of the Vedic tradition. The exegetes in the Udasi and the Nirmala schools, who had come to the field of Sikh exegesis after having made a deep study of Indian sacred literature, generally equated the Guru Granth Sahib with the Vedas and explained and interpreted its hymns in the Vedic perspective. To them, Vedas were the norm, and they interpreted each hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib with evidence from the Vedas.

There were also exegetes who began with the supposition that there is always a historical happening to inspire any work of art and literature: they might find justification for this in Guru Amar Das' verse which says that 'whatever the personages utter is always in some context'. The protagonists of this belief introduced one or the other event from the life-accounts of the Gurus and such other literature to interpret a particular hymn: in many cases they also invented such stories when they could not find any in the extant literature. This has been a popular approach with many preachers because it makes interesting the otherwise prosaic subject.

The establishment of British rule in Punjab and the introduction of new policy of Western education brought about a significant change in the

Sikh thinking. The Singh Sabha and the Akali movements played a significant role not only in giving Sikhs a distinct identity but also served as a turning point in the history of Sikh exegesis. The exegesis done under their influence, known as the Singh Sabha school of exegesis, looked at the Sikh doctrine and ideology as independent and distinct. Their understanding and explanation of the scripture thus became devoid of any Vedic influence as well as from the need of providing a context to a hymn.

### III

Among the protagonists of this school, Professor Sahib Singh has been a highly respected name. He has been of the firm view that the language of the hymns of the Guru Granth Sahib is on the lines of some special grammatical rules just as the language of each age is according to a special grammar.<sup>1</sup> He held that orthography of a language has its own laws in the given space and time, and it is necessary to properly understand and fully master these laws to make a rational and objective interpretation of any religious Scripture. Earlier Ernst Trumpp had also indicated that the Guru Granth Sahib had its own grammar and it was only proper that the exegesis of the Scripture was done with the help of that grammar. The pre-eminent contribution of Prof. Sahib Singh is his articulation of grammatical rules for Gurbani. He wrote for this purpose a comprehensive grammar of the *bani*, *Gurbani Viakaran*, which he completed in 1932, Teja Singh's book on vowel marks (*Shabadantik Lagan-Matra de Gujjhe Bhed*) used in the Scripture serves only a limited purpose. Although both Teja Singh and Sahib Singh worked on this common subject almost contemporaneously, yet interestingly neither of them has referred to the work of the other.

Sahib Singh not only articulated the grammatical rules for Gurbani but also put the language of the Guru Granth Sahib to grammatical scrutiny and successfully used this method to bring out the mystical and metaphysical nuances of the hymns. Sahib Singh was equally aware of the development of the language of the Scripture, and he has laid emphasis on this historical aspect as well. At several places in his *tika* of the Guru Granth Sahib (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*, 1925-61) he has given examples to reveal the different historical phases of the language. Interestingly, he gives only one set of rules for the language used for the entire corpus of hymns ignoring the fact that the language used by Sheikh Farid is older by about two hundred years than the one used by Guru Tegh Bahadur. Perhaps

there is a great need to further extend his work.

One of the chief characteristics of the exegesis done by Prof. Sahib Singh is that he attributes only one meaning to any given Scriptural verse. He weighs and analyses each and every word in the Scripture in the light of grammatical rules and gives meaning to them. While working on his *tika*, he has looked at each word strictly from the rules of grammar, and a fundamental grammatical assumption is that each sentence has a specific meaning, without any second meaning which is equally true. Unlike him, most of the exegetes from earlier schools of exegesis preferred to give multiple meanings to a verse. Even some exegetes from the Singh Sabha school, such as Bhai Vir Singh, generally gave one meaning to a verse, but they did not rule out the possibility of a second meaning.

Prof. Sahib Singh takes this one-meaning theory a step ahead by holding on to the principle that a verse can have only one meaning and that one meaning can have only one explanation. To him, this seems only a natural development of the first step whereas scholars like Taran Singh and Bhai Vir Singh do not deny the possibility of a second explanation. In the case of certain hymns which other exegetes try to explain differently in the context of a particular event in history, Prof. Sahib Singh remains firm on his principle of one explanation of any one verse/meaning: we see several such instances in the *Darpan*.

Like a formalist critic, Prof. Sahib Singh explains a verse or hymn as it stands. He does not explain it in any given or invented historical or literary context. There was ñ and still is ñ a tendency among the Sikh preachers to provide a historical setting to a hymn. These introductory contexts are generally taken from the life-accounts of the Gurus, but sometimes these are also the result of an exegete's own imagination. He gives, in his *Darpan*, scores of instances to prove how a particular context provided by an exegete only distorted the true meaning of the text. His emphasis on this has helped students and scholars of Sikh religion to learn to explain and interpret the scriptural hymns shorn of all imaginary or real social and historical contexts and thus avoid the risk of arriving at a meaning which is not correct.

Prof. Sahib Singh holds that there runs a continuous and consistent chain of thought through each and every longer composition. He goes to

the extent of saying that even the *slokas* of Kabir and Farid are not isolated units, rather they are connected with the chain of certain thoughts. Unlike him, earlier exegetical schools took each verse as an independent unit and explained it thus, the idea of the presence of a unifying chain of common thought in a hymn never occurred to them. Even some exegetes in the Singh Sabha School (e.g. Bhai Jodh Singh) consider it a myth.

The Guru Granth Sahib comprises hymns not only of six of the ten Sikh Gurus but also of several holy men belonging to the Hindu as well as Muslim religious traditions. The compositions of the latter are included in the Scripture under the common nomenclature of *bhakta-bani*. Of the latter contributors, those from the Bhakti movement belong to the pre-Nanak era and most of them underwent a spiritual sojourn during which they transformed themselves from *sagun bhakti* to the *nirgun* school: this transformation gets reflected in several of their hymns. Prof. Sahib Singh is able to see through this spiritual development and does not, like many of his predecessors in the field, consider it an inner contradiction. He finds no contradiction either within *bhakta-bani* or between *bhakta bani* and Gurbani. What seemed contradictory to others is convincingly explained away by him as reflective of the different stages of spiritual growth of the contributor concerned. He finds no contradiction whatsoever anywhere in the scripture: to him, the Guru Granth Sahib is the infallible Guru who gives us unambiguously clear guidance in our lives.

Another significant characteristic of Prof. Sahib Singh's exegesis is his preference for writing the scriptural text by separating each word in a line. The earlier exegetes and scribes preferred the old system of writing all the words in a line as a single unit. All the modern-day scholars as well as laymen prefer separate words because it makes the reading and understanding of the text easier, yet there were many who initially criticised this system. In fact, Prof. Sahib Singh goes a step further in this direction, besides separating the words, he has at places put punctuation marks as well. Since these punctuation marks are put only in the exegetical work, and not in the scripture as such, these have helped the students and scholars without in any way hurting anybody's religious sensibilities.

During the early years of Sikh tradition, the singers of Gurbani generally held that the *rahau* verses served as refrain and accordingly they used to repeat these verses while singing a hymn. They and the exegetes

of earlier schools of exegesis did not think of the *rahau* verses in any other way. However, Prof. Sahib Singh holds on to the principle that the *rahau* verses in a hymn contain the central idea of that hymn. That is why many times he puts, in his *Darpan*, the explanation of the *rahau* verse in the beginning even though it might appear mid-way in the hymn. Most of the modern-day scholars and exegetes tend to agree with Prof. Sahib Singh though there are some who opine that this opinion cannot hold good at least in all the cases, especially longer compositions like *Sukhmani* and *Sidha Gosti*.

#### IV

There is no denying the fact that Prof. Sahib Singh occupies a place of pre-eminence in the history of Sikh exegesis. The exegetical approach followed by him is not only new but also objective and rational vis-à-vis the ones followed by scholars and exegetes before him. In his exegesis of scriptural hymns, he has applied this approach with rare determination and thoroughness which enables him to provide unity and clarity to the exegetical meaning of the holy text. Consequently, his work has so far remained unsurpassed and the first choice among students and scholars.

## THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE SIKHS

*Max Arthur Macauliffe*

[This paper is an extract from the author's longish article 'The Holy Writings of the Sikhs' which was originally read before the Aryan Section of the Congress of Orientalists in Paris (1897) and was published in April, July and October numbers of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* for 1898. In 1900, it was published by the Christian Association Press, Allahabad. The paper is also included in Darshan Singh (ed.), *Western Image of the Sikh Religion: A Source Book*, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 1999. It reflects Macauliffe's motives in rendering the sacred writings of the Sikhs into English ñ Ed.]

Several years ago I attended the great Diwali fair at Amritsar, and it appeared to me to be worth describing in the *Calcutta Review*. In doing so, it became necessary for me to understand something of the Sikh religion. I accordingly read at the time several hymns of the Sikh Gurus. Having once begun them, I was tempted by the sublimity of their style and the high standard of ethics which they inculcated to continue. I accordingly devoted my spare time for several years to their study, and I generally kept a gyani or professional interpreter of the [Guru] Granth Sahib in my employ. At an early period of my studies, I made the acquaintance of the only book which professes to be translation of the Sikh sacred volume. I refer to the so-called translation by Dr. Trumpp, a German missionary, who was employed at great expense by the India Office to translate the sacred book of the Sikhs into English. I found that his work, large as it is, only contained a translation of four out of the thirty one rags which compose the [Ad] Granth. I soon further found that he, being a foreigner, was unable to write English correctly, that his translation was generally unidiomatic, and in many cases unintelligible even to an Englishman.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, he disregarded the traditional interpretations of Gyanis, or professional interpreters of the [Guru] Granth Sahib, and prided himself on substituting for them his own generally inaccurate versions. But what

is still worse, he, being filled with theological zeal, made occasional remarks on the Sikh doctrines and even on the Sikh gurus which would, I think not have occurred to a less enthusiastic writer.

In an address presented by the Sikhs to the Governor-General on the 16th of November, 1888, occurs the following passage:- 'The translation made by Dr. Trumpp, who was employed by the India Office for the purpose, is bristling with sentences altogether wide of the meaning, so much so that one regrets the useless labour and the large amount of money spent in vain.'

In a letter addressed to myself by the Singh Sabha of Ferozepore of the 3rd of May, 1893, it was stated: 'The translation by Dr. Trumpp is not reliable, and we regret to see that Government is spending many thousands on it produced no satisfactory result.'

In the preface to an English translation of the Japji made in November, 1893, by a learned descendant of the third Guru, he writes:- 'Dr. Trumpp's version is painfully literal, obscure, and unintelligible. Rather than draw out the meaning of the text, he appears to mystify it as much as possible.'

The total result appears to be that Dr. Trumpp's translation is rather detrimental than advantageous to the religion of the Sikhs. The Khalsa Diwan knowing this, and also knowing that I had been studying the sacred books of the Sikhs for a long time, sent me, before my return to duty from my last furlough, two written requests to complete my translation of their sacred writings, and I was promised compensation for retirement from the public service, and for the expenses attending my researches and the publication of my work. I accordingly resigned my post as Divisional Judge in the Punjab for the purpose, and for several years I have worked almost unremittingly at the task the Sikhs assigned me.

I myself also thought that a translation of the sacred writings of the Sikhs was necessary in all interests. I had often been asked even by intelligent persons in Europe, America, Australia, and even India itself, what the Sikh religion was, and whether the Sikhs were Hindus, idolaters, or Muhammadans; and I thought it was not good even for the Sikhs themselves that this ignorance regarding their religion should be allowed to continue. The British Government and all persons of discrimination set a high value on the Sikhs, but I thought that knowledge throughout the world of the



excellence of their religion would enhance even the present regard with which they are entertained, and that thus my translation would be at least of political advantage to them. In the second place, there is now a large number of Sikhs who understand the English language, but who have not time for the study of the compositions of their Gurus, and I thought it would be useful to them both from a spiritual and linguistic point of view to read translation in the very simple English in which I have endeavoured to write it. In the third place, the old gyanis are dying out, and there are few to take their place, and, probably in another generation or two, their sacred books will, owing to their enormous difficulty, be practically unintelligible even to otherwise educated Sikhs. Since I myself began my Sikh studies, several of the great gyanis whom I have known and who have assisted me have died, and I do not know who will take the place of the few who now remain. In the fourth place, the vernacular itself is rapidly altering and diverging more and more from the general language of the [Guru] Granth Sahib. Words which men still in the prime of life were accustomed to use in their boyhood, have now become obsolete, and new vocables have taken their place. It appeared therefore to me that it would on every account be well for the Sikhs to avail themselves of the present opportunity, and endeavour to fix for all time the translation of many exceedingly difficult passages scattered broadcast through their sacred writings. In the fifth place, when a translation is once made and approved of in English, it can be easily rendered into Panjabi or Hindustani. There is at present no trustworthy translation of the sacred books of the Sikhs in either of these languages. Consequently, the great mass of the Sikhs, to whom the [Guru] Granth Sahib is almost totally un-intelligible, are becoming quite ignorant of their originally pure religion, and rapidly reverting to superstition sometimes of the grossest character. In the sixth place, in my translation and in the lives of the Gurus which I propose to write, I hope to refute several statements made by European writers disparaging to the Gurus.<sup>2</sup> In the seventh place, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one acquainted with the sacred writings of the Sikhs, that, were the Gurus and Bhagats or saints who composed them now alive, they would be pleased to see their compositions translated into a language like the English, spoken by a great and enterprising people throughout the continents and islands which extend far and wide over the earth.

Guru Gobind Singh says:

Jo Prabh jagat kaha so kah hon,  
Mrit log te mon na gahi hon.  
Kahyo Prabhu so bhakh hon;  
Kisu na kan rakh hon.<sup>3</sup>

These are some of the advantages which I have been anticipating for the Sikhs themselves from my translation, but of course there are other advantages of more general character. My translation will practically introduce a new religion to the world, which may derive advantage from the high ethical principles of the Sikh Gurus- those great men who must be admitted even by the most bigoted members of other religions to be true seekers after God. In the second place, my translation will be useful to the historians throwing considerable light on the state of Indian society in the Middle Ages. Thirdly, the [Guru] Granth Sahib, containing as it does words from all languages indigenous to or introduced into India up to the time of the tenth Guru, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Turki, Marathi, and even Gujrati, is an unequalled mine of philology. I have been struck with the considerable number of words I have found in Gurmukhi dress, from which common words in English and other European languages appear to have been derived. Fourthly, it is admitted that knowledge of the religions of the people of India is a desideratum for the British officials who administer its affairs, and indirectly for the people who are governed by them; and it is no doubt with that object the India Office employed Dr. Trumpp to make a translation of [Ad] Granth.

I am aware that in the opinion of several Sikhs a translation of the [Guru] Granth Sahib is impossible. One Sikh nobleman in a very high position has stated to me that only the men who wrote the compositions contained therein could understand them. I do not think this view is correct. If the Sikh Gurus and the Bhagats who preceded them did not intend their compositions to be understood, it would be unmeaning to have written or uttered them at all. Indeed there are several passage in the sacred writings of the Sikhs, which inculcate the teaching of truth to every one regardless of caste or creed. At the same time, there is no doubt that, even speaking as guardedly as possible, the [Guru] Granth Sahib is perhaps the most difficult book in the world. Apart from the numerous languages and dialects therein represented, it has no grammar, and until recently it has had no

dictionary, and even now it has none that is of any very practical use.<sup>4</sup> The [Guru] Granth Sahib abounds with verses which will bear various different interpretations, and no doubt it would be very comforting to the reader if the Gurus were alive to refer to for explanation, but I believe the general meaning of the sacred volume can be adequately rendered into English by great labour, study, and inquiry.

Such I have endeavoured to bestow on it. For years I have studied in India with gyanis of reputation, and spared neither time, nor health, nor money. I have had as gyanis Sirdar Kahn Singh of Nabha-a young Sikh gentleman of great learning and promise-Bhais Nihal Singh and Sant Singh of Sialkot; Bhais Dit Singh, Gurmukh Singh, Rajindar Singh (editor of the *Khalsa Bahadur*) and Nihal Singh of Lahore; Bhais Sardul Singh *Gyani* (son of Gyan Singh *Gyani*), Prem Singh, Fatah Singh, and Darbara Singh of Amritsar, Bhai Sant Singh of Kapurthala, Bhai Bhagwan Singh of Patiala, and Bhai Dasaundha Singh of Ferozpur.

I could have wished the translation into English was made by a Sikh, but-and it may be as well to put the matter clearly to prevent error and disappointment-there is not as yet, so far as I am aware, any Sikh sufficiently acquainted with English to make an idiomatic translation into it; and another translation such as Dr. Trumpp's would only cast further ridicule on the Sikh religion. The work therefore, if done at all, must be done by an Englishman.<sup>5</sup> In a few generations there will no doubt be Sikhs who can write literary English, but it is hardly likely that such will be well acquainted with the [Guru] Granth Sahib, seeing that there are now hardly any Sikhs who have made an advanced study of English, and at the same time acquired a complete knowledge of their own sacred writings.

To anticipate any objection of myself as a translator of the Sikh sacred writings I wrote as follows in February 1892 to the Panjab Government: iMy own views on religious matters being absolutely unsectarian, I would aim at producing a book acceptable to the Sikhs themselves. I hold no brief from any religious denomination, and would describe the Sikh religion as it is without the introduction of any opinions or comments of my own.î In furtherance of this promise made to the Government, I have been very careful to adopt the traditional translations given me by the best gyanis, and I have also, whenever practicable engaged English-speaking Sikhs to read my translations, and invited them to offer

me their comments and suggestions.

Whatever may be thought of my work, I do not think that any European will ever again undertake a translation of the Sacred books of the Sikhs. The difficulties and expense attending the work are enormous. No official while in government service could ever spare time to accomplish it; and it is not every official who would care to spend many years in India after retirement for the purpose. Were the sacred writings of the Sikhs written in a homogeneous language with a systematic grammar and vocabulary, no doubt there would have been already several translators of them by the savants of Europe, but the sacred books of the Sikhs have not been and cannot be so translated. It is necessary for a translator to reside in India, and place himself at the feet of the best gyanis, who are totally unacquainted with the English language. Few of them indeed even speak Hindustani, but give their interpretations in long paraphrases in Punjabi dialects, and most of them have a decided objection to impart a knowledge of their sacred books to Europeans. This, however, is only a part of the difficulty, for, wherever I have gone, the gyanis have always given me different translations; and one of my most trying functions as a translator has been to decide between rival and contradictory versions. Had I known earlier the difficulties I should have to encounter, I should certainly never have undertaken a translation of this description.

On giving the above explanation to the Sikhs of Amritsar, the head quarters of the Sikh religion, where I have studied the sacred books of the Sikhs for nearly three years, and expressing a wish to them that they should appoint a committee of priests thoroughly conversant with their Scriptures to examine my translation, and judge of its correctness and conformity with the tenets of the Sikh religion, I was invited by the custodians of the Darbar Sahib or Golden Temple, the famous Sikh fane at Amritsar, to address from the Takht Akal Bungah, or Sikh Holies of Holy, a large anniversary meeting on the subject of my translation. I may state that I am the only European who has ever been similarly honoured. After my address it was proposed by Colonel Jawala Singh, superintendent of the Golden Temple, and seconded by Bhai Basant Singh, editor of the *Khalsa Gazette*, Lahore, that a committee of learned Sikh be appointed to examine and revise my translation, and that the Sikh chiefs be invited to co-operate. This proposal was carried unanimously. Bhai Basant Singh,

as representing the rising Sikh literati, made a powerful speech on my behalf, which would look too much like self-praise for me to reproduce.

The committee for the examination of my translation was formed and after the examination Bhai Sardul Singh (son of Gyan Singh Gyani) the great priest of the Golden Temple, Bhai Sant Singh, a very learned Sikh priest of Kapurthalla, and Bhai Prem Singh of Amritsar gave me the following certificate under their signature.

i We, through the agency of learned Sikhs acquainted with English, have carefully pursued the translation of the hymns of the [Guru]Granth Sahib by Mr. Macauliffe. The perusal cost us a month and a half of continuous labour. Wherever any of us found what seemed to be an error we all met, discussed the passages, and either corrected it or allowed Mr. Macauliffe's translation to stand. Wherefore we now state that Mr. Macauliffe's translation has been fully revised by us, and is thoroughly correct. The greatest care has been taken in making the translation conformable to the religious tenets of the Sikhs. The translation is quite literal and done according to all grammatical and rhetorical rules.

i We now request the Rajahs, Maharajahs, Sirdars, and the learned and accomplished of the Sikh faith, to specially read or listen to this translation, if only for once. They will thus become acquainted with Mr. Macauliffe's labor, and reap the advantage of the true instruction of their Gurus. They should also render all necessary aid to the translator, because he has resigned a high post under Government and has spent untold wealth on this undertaking.î

While the committee was sitting, the sacred volume of the Sikhs was read three times continuously night and day by relays of Sikh priests for the success of my work; and a special religious service, according to the rites of the Sikh faith, was held for me personally of the third reading. This too has never before been done for any European. I think I may say that all the Sikhs who are capable of reading my translation, have shown the utmost enthusiasm regarding it. I hold numerous letters from Sikh of all classes blessing me and thanking me or my labours in bringing their religion to general notice, and in explaining its obscurities to themselves in what I hope is intelligible language.

It apparently only now remains for the Indian Government to signify

its approval of my labors-and I am in hope that such approval will be eventually accorded-in order that the Sikhs may be induced to adhere their promises to me, and that my work may be published. Such is the power of the Indian Government, that, without its sanction or recommendation, even independent chiefs with plenary powers of administration feel it unsafe to undertake anything however praiseworthy in itself; and of this I hold tangible proof in my possession.

All elaborate translations of this description have been made by combination and concerted action. The Old Testament is believed to have been translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy scholars.

The New Testament was translated into English in the time of James I by a committee of English divines. That Translation was revised some years since in a similar way. A committee of missionaries sat for protracted period in India not long since to revise the Urdu translation of the Bible; and even translations which are not exactly of a religious character have been largely subsidised by the Government and the native nobility. In a review of the late Babu Protap Chandra Roy's translation of the Mahabharat, it was stated in the *Civil and Military Gazette*: "Mrs. Roy acknowledges in her postscript that the contributions received by her husband from the Secretary of the State, the Government of India, and the various Local Governments, amounted in all to the good round sum of Rs. 45,000. Mrs. Roy acknowledges that her husband received liberal subsidies from almost all the Indian Princes and noblemen; and we may reasonably conclude that their munificence was in no small degree stimulated by official influence."

Dr. Griffiths, who translated the great Sanskrit Epic, the Ramayana, into English verse during the incumbency of Sir William Muir, lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces of India, thus writes in the conclusion of his preface; "I beg to offer my sincere thanks to the Governments of Bengal, the Panjab, Bombay, Mysore, the Central Provinces, and Oudh, for the liberal aid which, at the recommendation of the several Directors of Public Instruction, they have given to my undertaking; and more especially am I bound to render my best thanks to the very distinguished Oriental scholar at the head of the Government of the North-Western Provinces." Several parallel cases might be cited.

### REFERENCES

1. I have already given some specimens of Dr. Trumpp's translation in the foot-notes.
2. Several of these disparaging statements are due to Captain Troyer's inaccurate translation of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Dr. Trumpp has reproduced a painfully incorrect and defamatory account of Guru Har Gobind.
3. What God told me I tell the world. I shall not be silent before mortals. As God spoke, so I proclaim, I pay no regard to anyone besides.
4. There is at present an opportunity open to a Sikh scholar to produce a thoroughly good dictionary of the [Guru] Granth Sahib. The elaborate work of the late Pandit Tara Singh of Patiala might be taken as a basis.
5. Under this term I include such eminent foreign scholars as the honourable Professor Max Muller and Dr. Leitner, who have permanently settled in England and who can write English like Englishmen.

## THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB : AN EMBODIMENT OF SIKHISM AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

*Dr. Sulakhan Singh*

Three historic occasions that directly relate to the history of the Guru Granth Sahib have incidentally fallen in the recent years. Perhaps we are fortunate enough that we have witnessed these major events of Sikh history organized with great pomp and gaiety the world over. Quad-centenary of the first installation ceremony of the Guru Granth Sahib (September 1, 1604 C.E.) in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Harimandar Sahib at Amritsar with Baba Buddha its first *Granthi* was celebrated with great religious fervor and reverence in September 2004. Similarly, Tercentenary of the finalization of Guru Granth Sahib and its installation as an Eternal Guru of the Sikhs was held in 2006 and 2008 respectively. This paper, though brief, has been written with a view to explore the role of Sikh scripture in the institutional development of Sikhism. As it is very difficult to cover a very wide spectrum of socio-religious and political institutions of Sikhs that have developed over a period of time, the present attempt has been purposely confined to the brief description of only those fundamental ideals and institutions of the Sikhs which originated and grew to maturity along with the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. However this does not mean that the Guru Granth Sahib, the Eternal Guru, had stopped playing any significant role in the formation of socio-political institutions of the Sikhs as well as in their struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it may also be made abundantly clear that the Sikh faith and the Sikh institutions have so constantly grown together that it has been extremely impossible to separate the Sikh religion from the Sikh history. Moreover, they are inextricably so intertwined that we cannot understand properly one without making reference to the other.

Sikhism as a new dispensation was born out of Guru Nanak's intense



religious experience as well as his sharp response to his contemporary socio-religious and political milieu. It is the youngest and the latest among all the religions of the world. In its content and thought, it belongs to the category of life affirming religions. Its theological concepts, doctrine and philosophy as well as its institutions fundamentally represent the *Miri* (temporal) and the *Piri* (spiritual) system of man's life i.e. the combination of spiritual and empirical human life. In the Sikh faith as such, there is no scope for the Hindu ideal of asceticism and the practices of renunciation (*udas*) and celibacy. This is what clearly marks its independent existence and distinct identity from the life-negating religious systems from its very beginning. Its distinctiveness further crystallized under the successors of Guru Nanak and especially more so during the pontificate Guru Arjan Dev who codified the Sikh Scripture in 1604 C.E. which embodies the cardinal principals of Sikhism concerning God and man's goal in life. It is in this sense that Guru Granth Sahib is the real source of strength for the socio-religious life as well as their political ideas and institutions.

If Sikhism survives today, it is primarily because of the pivotal role the Guru Granth Sahib has played since its formation in unifying the Sikhs throughout the world and keeping their institutions and organizations of socio-religious and political importance intact. As is the brief history of the Sikh Scripture, it was canonized by Guru Arjan Dev with the help of a Sikh poet and a theologian Bhai Gurdas, an amanuensis, and was then installed in the Harimandar Sahib. Its uniqueness and glory lies in the fact that it contains compositions not only of the Sikh Gurus (first five and the ninth Guru), but also of some medieval Indian poets (the *Bhagats* of standing) representing different religious denominations. Moreover its message of love and compassion and universal brotherhood of Mankind is as relevant today as it was during its past history and the history of Sikh community. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that the Guru Granth Sahib as an embodiment of universal values is in fact the real way of life of the whole world.

Unfortunately, in the recent a few decades, the Sikh scripture has come under the cloud of unsavory debate in the academic circles, especially in respect to the process (es) of its formation. Several doubts regarding the originality and the authenticity of its text have been raised by certain Indian and western scholars in their recent publications. This debate has

evoked a good scholarly response and has adequately resulted into fairly a good number of recent studies on varied aspects of the Sikh Scripture. In this respect the Sikh scholars have responded to the debate in an academic manner to remove the alleged doubts about the authenticity of the Sikh Scripture. Needless to say, the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib still holds the same veneration among the Sikhs and the people of the world as it has earned an inherited throughout its history.

As it was expected *a priori*, institutionalization of Sikhism practically evolved with the experiences of the life and mission of Guru Nanak himself. He lived the life of a householder at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) and preached his ideals of social responsibility, hard work and sharing one's fruit with others. He composed hymns or verses in praise of God (the Gurbani or the Bani) to be used by his followers for the socio-religious and liturgical purposes. It was this practice of composing the Bani as continued by his successors which resulted in the formation of the Sikh canon. This is how the institution of the Gurbani (strictly speaking the utterances of Sikh Gurus recorded in the Sikh Scripture; also used for the compositions of the other contributors of the Scripture) has evolved to form the nucleus of the spiritual and empirical way of life of the Sikhs and the people at large.

Moreover, with the practical manifestations of the Gurbani and the practice of the *Kirtan* i.e. singing the praises of the Almighty in the company of the like-minded through the medium of the *Sabad*, the Word, as the Guru were laid the foundations of some other allied institutions of fundamental importance such as the *Dharamsal* (later on came to be known as the *Gurdwara*), the *Sangat* (congregation) and the *Pangat* or the *Langar*, the practice of dinning together. The *Dharamsal* initially referred to the place(s) sanctified by the Sikh Gurus or the persons associated with them. The formation of such religious assemblies at places associated with the Sikh Gurus or the associations formed by their designated individuals or groups of individuals from time to time came to be known as the *Sangats* or the congregations of the believers of Sikhism. The number of the *Sangats* increased tremendously with the expansion and consolidation of the Sikh Panth under the successors of Guru Nanak. Thus, the spirit of all these institutions certainly lies in the content and thought of the Sikh Scripture.

The institution of the *Langar* or the free kitchen historically grew conjointly with the institutions of the *Dharamsal* and the *Sangat*. Surprisingly enough, a New Zealander scholar of Sikh history and religion, W.H. McLeod, has raised some doubts so far as the genesis of this institution is concerned. He writes, 'It is not known for certain which Guru introduced the practice, but it was evidently present in the time of Guru Amar Das' (*Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, p.130). But, hardly there is any doubt that Guru Nanak himself by introducing this practice during his lifetime is known to have put into practice his ideal of universal man and his perception of a casteless society. The institution not only further developed under his successors but was also added a new dimension to it by Guru Amar Das who made it obligatory for all who visited the Guru to first dine together and then to see the Guru i.e. *pehle pangat pichhe sangat*. Needless to say, the institution has now become an integral part of the institution of the Gurdwara as well as the socio-religious and cultural life of the Sikh community.

Under the successors of Guru Nanak, the Sikh institutions further grew in terms of number and influence. Guru Angad not only modified the *Gurmukhi* script but also made it more popular among his contemporaries. Thus it acted as an effective instrument to the making of the Sikh Scripture. Guru Amar Das gave further impetus to the growth of Sikh Panth by adding the institution of *Manjis* (bedstead) i.e. the centers primarily meant for the missionary work. The holder of the *Manji* was known as the *Manjidar*. Moreover with a view to the growing needs of the Sikh community, Guru Ram Das added a new dimension to the institutional developments of the Sikh faith by appointing the *Masands* (from Arabic word *Masnad* meaning an authorized or commissioned missionary of the Gurus) who now were also directed to collect offerings or the *Daswandh* (the tithe or one tenth of the earnings) from the Sikhs and to deposit the collected amount to the Guru's treasury. As with the passage of time, the *Masands* grew corrupt, the institution was ultimately abolished by Guru Gobind Singh.

Impact of the Gurbani or the Sikh Scripture on the social life of the Sikhs as it has grown over a period of time is clearly discernible from the institution of marriage as it is performed in the Sikh way of life through the practice of the *Lavan* (the act of circumambulating around the sacred scripture) and the whole ceremony is termed as the *Anand* marriage in

the Sikh usage. During the marriage four stanzas of Guru Ram Das's *Suhi chhant* (GGS, pp 773-774) are sung to solemnize the occasion; not only this, the Sikhs also continue to observe some social rights and ceremonies concerning birth and death in accordance with the message of Sikh Scripture.

The central institution of the Harimandar Sahib and the pre-empt institution of the *Akal Takhat* (the throne of the immortal) built by Guru Hargobind immediately facing the Harmandir Sahib are the real manifestations or true representatives of the ideology of the Sikh Scripture i.e. the *Miri-Piri* system of life as lived and experienced by the Sikh Gurus themselves. These two institutions continue even today to fulfill the socio-religious and political purposes of the Sikh community.

The institution of the Order of the *Khalsa* (the pure having direct relation with the Guru) founded by Guru Gobind Singh on the *Baisakhi* day of 1699 C.E. was primarily meant to serve the cause of the righteous against injustice or favour the cause of the good against evil as envisioned by the Guru himself. The undying spirit of the *Khalsa* and its symbolism undoubtedly has played very crucial role as a great catalyst or the driving force in the history of the Sikhs and their religion even at times of very odd eventualities. The force that works behind all this and several other institutions of the Sikhs as stated above is, no doubt, the noble spirit and the message of the Guru Granth Sahib.

## **HISTORY AND TRADITION OF EXEGESIS WITH REFERENCE TO GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

*Inderjeet Kaur &  
Dr. Jatinder Singh*

An 'interpretation' is a term known as *Tafsir* in Arabic as well as in Persian literature and exegesis in English. It was an important tradition in the field of literary studies and even today it is essential as a basic measurement for the interpretation of any text. It centres around studies on the original text of a Scripture. Interpretation or exegesis is needed because of the usage of esoteric terms and revealed experiences contained in the words of a Scripture. Sometimes a literary work or a text needs much more detailed descriptive commentary as compared to simple interpretation. In sum, an exegesis, interpretation or commentary help the reader in understanding a text containing author's subjective mystical experience of the Divine communicated through use of various metaphors and symbols. From the local to the global level, interpretation is more than ever an important and much debated part of modern life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

Hermeneutics is becoming more and more a living and challenging issue in religious discussions. It is true to say that religions can survive and flourish only through a meaningful hermeneutics i.e., the relevant interpretation of their Scriptures. On the one hand, the origins of religions lie in the distant past and most of their sacred books were originally in languages which have now become obsolete. We can thus come into contact and understand with these religions and their sacred books only through their interpretation. Thus the sacred books are at once ancient and contemporary; incarnate in a particular form, they claim to speak to all generations; circumscribed in language and cultural perspective, they lay claim to universality. The dynamics of this tension between the past and the present, between particularism and universalism constitute the task of hermeneutics today.

**History and Purpose of Exegesis:**

It is often said that the interpretation of a Scripture begins soon after its compilation. The same is true in the context of the Guru Granth Sahib also. For a true interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism, the Sikh Gurus themselves have explained how to understand and interpret the Bani or its belief system. As it is evident from the Sikh history, the most important school of interpretation originated during the lifetime of the Gurus themselves. Apart from the Gurus, the first effort to interpret the Gurbani was made by Bhai Gurdas. It is said that when the Guru Granth Sahib was installed in the Harimander Sahib, the practice of exposition of Gurbani was also started. Since then, the tradition of interpretation has continued in one form or the other.

Guru Nanak, in his hymns, has clearly laid down the roadmap to arrive at the ultimate objective of human life: the goal of life is to realize the Will of God. It can be realized by becoming in tune with His Will i.e. to identify one's will with the Divine Will. The approach emphasized here is more practical than academic. This is the unique feature of the Sikh faith which cannot be ignored for the perception and interpretation of Gurbani. Consequently, in Sikhism, the unity of the spiritual experience of the Gurus, their ideology and their deeds, has to be accepted in order to grasp true meaning of their utterances.

Religion, in the words of Rudolf Otto, is based on the experience of the Numinous. The same is enshrined in the Scriptures. Since the experience of the Numinous is primarily non-rational, the nature of the scriptural language is mostly symbolic, metaphorical and allegorical. In order to make the mystical experience intelligible and accessible to the common man, to make a convincing explanation, the interpretation of the Scripture is needed. The purpose of the exegesis is not only to interpret the religious experience but also to relate this eternal message to every new historical situation. Exegesis thus aims at providing a comprehensive study of the Scripture from the philosophical, literary, theological, philological and comparative perspectives.<sup>2</sup>

A significant purpose of exegesis is to understand the religious personality of the writer as manifested in every single word, to look from the details to the whole, and from the standpoint of the whole to set the details in their true light. To understand the ideas or mind of the author is another major purpose of exegesis because without this understanding

it is impossible to make a text comprehensive to the present reader. It is easy to repeat verbally what one has heard, but difficult to reproduce it in its true sense; and unless every detail is brought out by a good paraphrase something will usually be lost. The task of conveying the thought in another language presents special difficulties. The translation must not be slavishly literal nor yet merely a free rendering of the sense, but must be in keeping as much with the genius of the original text as with that of the foreign language. The fixing of the true text is the important task or responsibility of an exegete.

The central task of the exegesis is completed by answering three questions: (1) What is the theological (allegorical) meaning? (2) What is its moral (tropological) meaning? (3) What is its eschatological (anagogic) meaning?<sup>3</sup> The mystical meaning of a Scripture cannot be discovered by following the literal interpretation. So to remain only on the literal level is to keep oneself in darkness, or to keep oneself away from the anagogic meaning which is purposely the real meaning, the allegorical sense is said to be lying behind the literal sense; the tropological sense is that kind of interpretation whereby a reader finds a moral lesson in the words, and in the anagogical sense the meaning is raised from earthly subjects to heavenly.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Meaning and Need for Exegesis:**

Exegesis is the consonance of Word and Consciousness. The exegesis is related with the philosophy, ideology, history, society, culture, etc. Due to its vastness of field, it becomes difficult to give the correct and universal definition of exegesis. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word exegesis means, iAn exposition, especially of a Scripture; a gloss, an explanatory note or discourse.î<sup>5</sup> Its literal meaning is a critical explanation or interpretation of Scripture<sup>6</sup> and a literary commentary which is that branch of theology which deals with the interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures. The word has been derived from the Greek word *ēxegeesthai*, (to explain ex-out, *egeesthai*, to guide) which literally means to explain or to guide.<sup>7</sup> In its original sense, it is a form of explanation, exposition, a critical analysis, and interpretation of the Scripture and to bring to the surface the hidden meanings of the message otherwise unknown of the terms contained in the Scriptures. We also find some other terms which are synonyms to exegesis, e.g., interpretation, exposition and explanation etc. Hermeneutics is a comprehensive term which includes the meaning of all these terms in its scope.<sup>8</sup> According to Richard E. Palmer, hermeneutics has been

developed into an independent discipline for formulating universally valid rules of interpreting Scripture since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He further defines Hermeneutics saying that it is not a science of explanation but rather of understanding.<sup>9</sup>

Thinking, speaking and writing are three marvelous gifts which man possesses. A work of literature is not an object we understand by conceptualizing or analyzing it; it is a voice we must hear and through 'hearing' (rather than seeing) understand.<sup>10</sup> There are several reasons which demand the powerful need of exegesis. Firstly the composer of the Scripture whatever he composes does so in rapturous mood, being in complete union with Almighty. He dwells not only on the physical level but becomes the denizen of celestial regions as well. The mystic experience he achieves is conveyed through symbols which underneath carry the different meanings from those at the surface level. Thus the symbolic meanings are beyond the comprehension of layman as well as scholar. Secondly, like every living organ, language also develops with the passage of time. It changes with the passage of time and some old words become obsolete and their meanings become vague and sometimes even different. The new words come into use in place of the old ones as Dr. Piar Singh holds the change is the nature of language with time and space.<sup>11</sup> In the modern world, the science and technologies are rapidly developing thereby effecting a change in the thinking and attitude of the people. In order to meet the new challenges, the interpretation of the Scripture becomes necessary. Thirdly, an exposition of the Scripture is needed not only because of the symbolic language but also because of the nature of spiritual experience. Almost whole of the scriptural lore is the result of the devotional and intuitional set of mind. The resultant problem of comprehension ensues. For the reasons enumerated above, Scriptures need the exegesis to become intelligible to common man. According to R.E. McNally, their exposition and interpretation is of great import to set forth and explain their full thoughts.<sup>12</sup> Another significant reason is to give authentic and relevant information to the coming generations about the philosophy, history, culture etc., of their religion.

### **Forms of Exegesis:**

Since every religion has its own exegetical tradition, we find some exegetical literature in all the religions. The only purpose behind these commentaries, as we have already mentioned, is to explain the esoteric



meaning of a text to the present reader. In fact, exegesis is an effort to bring together both the subjective and objective dimensions of interpretations. The concepts like exegesis, exposition, explanation, interpretation, etc., are different in their nature and form but all are related to the interpretation or exegesis. Somehow all these become integral parts of the interpretation. It can also be said that these are the integral parts of interpretation.

In the same way, the exegetical literature has its own forms or types. *Teekas*, *Viakhias*, *Bhashayas*, *Paramarthas*, *Padarthas*, etc., are the various forms of exegesis in Sikhism. *Teeka* or exegesis is the common inclusive term used for exegetical works. Its etymological meaning is explanation or a commentary<sup>13</sup> and it explains the meanings of a text in brief. *Viakhia* or exposition is that form of exegetical literature in which the exegete endeavors to bring out the meaning in greater detail. In it, along with the word meaning, central idea and meaning of a hymn is explained in the context of total composition and personal comments and, where necessary, the cogent sources of other exegetical literature are given. Actually, it is the study of a given text in totality from various aspects. The *Bhashya* is a form of *Viakhia* to some extent. Its main stress is on the obscurities involved in the writing. Like the *Viakhia*, the exegesis in *Bhashya* intends to add certain elements from the outer sources to explain and explicate the meanings more clearly. *Paramarth* literally means spiritual meaning, the meaning other than the literal one of a text. We find this mode employed in the *Puranic* literature from which it came into Sikh exegetical literature during the Udasi or Nirmala saints' endeavor of Sikh exegesis. The exegete explains and explores the essential inner content of the text sometimes for the purpose of clarification, sometimes to strike a rapport with his audience or readers. The writer intends to go deep into the layer of the meaning of the words and bring hidden meanings to the surface. *Padarth* literally (*pad+arth*) are the word meanings, i.e., the literal meaning in the form of synonyms.<sup>14</sup>

The truth of the Scripture as we all know is the eternal truth. It needs interpretation in order to relate the eternal truth to mundane historical situation. The twentieth century Sikh scholars were attempting to explain the eternal message of the Gurbani in the context of the first half of this century. These scholars, on the one hand, have been responding to and rebutting the Western challenges by interpreting the Sikh doctrines and practices in the light of Western modes of interpretation. They adopted

their methodology but defended the unique features and status of the Sikh religion. On the other hand, they have been striving hard to maintain the distinct identity of the Sikh doctrine and practice in the face of chauvinistic designs which sought to disapprove the claim of Sikh religion as a distinct revealed faith. The interpretation of this period is, therefore, a departure from the traditional interpretation. It is maintaining its continuity as it is based on the eternal message of the Gurbani but it is also departure as it has been using the new tools and modes of interpretation to respond to the new challenges facing the Sikh religion.<sup>15</sup>

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## **THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB : AN EMBODIMENT OF SIKHISM AND ITS INSTITUTIONS**

*Dr. Sulakhan Singh*

Three historic occasions that directly relate to the history of the Guru Granth Sahib have incidentally fallen in the recent years. Perhaps we are fortunate enough that we have witnessed these major events of Sikh history organized with great pomp and gaiety the world over. Quad-centenary of the first installation ceremony of the Guru Granth Sahib (September 1, 1604 C.E.) in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Harimandar Sahib at Amritsar with Baba Buddha its first *Granthi* was celebrated with great religious fervor and reverence in September 2004. Similarly, Tercentenary of the finalization of Guru Granth Sahib and its installation as an Eternal Guru of the Sikhs was held in 2006 and 2008 respectively. This paper, though brief, has been written with a view to explore the role of Sikh scripture in the institutional development of Sikhism. As it is very difficult to cover a very wide spectrum of socio-religious and political institutions of Sikhs that have developed over a period of time, the present attempt has been purposely confined to the brief description of only those fundamental ideals and institutions of the Sikhs which originated and grew to maturity along with the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. However this does not mean that the Guru Granth Sahib, the Eternal Guru, had stopped playing any significant role in the formation of socio-political institutions of the Sikhs as well as in their struggle against the Mughals and the Afghans during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it may also be made abundantly clear that the Sikh faith and the Sikh institutions have so constantly grown together that it has been extremely impossible to separate the Sikh religion from the Sikh history. Moreover, they are inextricably so intertwined that we cannot understand properly one without making reference to the other.

Sikhism as a new dispensation was born out of Guru Nanak's intense religious experience as well as his sharp response to his contemporary

socio-religious and political milieu. It is the youngest and the latest among all the religions of the world. In its content and thought, it belongs to the category of life affirming religions. Its theological concepts, doctrine and philosophy as well as its institutions fundamentally represent the *Miri* (temporal) and the *Piri* (spiritual) system of man's life i.e. the combination of spiritual and empirical human life. In the Sikh faith as such, there is no scope for the Hindu ideal of asceticism and the practices of renunciation (*udas*) and celibacy. This is what clearly marks its independent existence and distinct identity from the life-negating religious systems from its very beginning. Its distinctiveness further crystallized under the successors of Guru Nanak and especially more so during the pontificate Guru Arjan Dev who codified the Sikh Scripture in 1604 C.E. which embodies the cardinal principals of Sikhism concerning God and man's goal in life. It is in this sense that Guru Granth Sahib is the real source of strength for the socio-religious life as well as their political ideas and institutions.

If Sikhism survives today, it is primarily because of the pivotal role the Guru Granth Sahib has played since its formation in unifying the Sikhs throughout the world and keeping their institutions and organizations of socio-religious and political importance intact. As is the brief history of the Sikh Scripture, it was canonized by Guru Arjan Dev with the help of a Sikh poet and a theologian Bhai Gurdas, an amanuensis, and was then installed in the Harimandar Sahib. Its uniqueness and glory lies in the fact that it contains compositions not only of the Sikh Gurus (first five and the ninth Guru), but also of some medieval Indian poets (the *Bhagats* of standing) representing different religious denominations. Moreover its message of love and compassion and universal brotherhood of Mankind is as relevant today as it was during its past history and the history of Sikh community. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that the Guru Granth Sahib as an embodiment of universal values is in fact the real way of life of the whole world.

Unfortunately, in the recent a few decades, the Sikh scripture has come under the cloud of unsavory debate in the academic circles, especially in respect to the process (es) of its formation. Several doubts regarding the originality and the authenticity of its text have been raised by certain Indian and western scholars in their recent publications. This debate has evoked a good scholarly response and has adequately resulted into fairly

a good number of recent studies on varied aspects of the Sikh Scripture. In this respect the Sikh scholars have responded to the debate in an academic manner to remove the alleged doubts about the authenticity of the Sikh Scripture. Needless to say, the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib still holds the same veneration among the Sikhs and the people of the world as it has earned an inheritance throughout its history.

As it was expected *a priori*, institutionalization of Sikhism practically evolved with the experiences of the life and mission of Guru Nanak himself. He lived the life of a householder at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) and preached his ideals of social responsibility, hard work and sharing one's fruit with others. He composed hymns or verses in praise of God (the Gurbani or the Bani) to be used by his followers for the socio-religious and liturgical purposes. It was this practice of composing the Bani as continued by his successors which resulted in the formation of the Sikh canon. This is how the institution of the Gurbani (strictly speaking the utterances of Sikh Gurus recorded in the Sikh Scripture; also used for the compositions of the other contributors of the Scripture) has evolved to form the nucleus of the spiritual and empirical way of life of the Sikhs and the people at large.

Moreover, with the practical manifestations of the Gurbani and the practice of the *Kirtan* i.e. singing the praises of the Almighty in the company of the like-minded through the medium of the *Sabad*, the Word, as the Guru were laid the foundations of some other allied institutions of fundamental importance such as the *Dharamsal* (later on came to be known as the *Gurdwara*), the *Sangat* (congregation) and the *Pangat* or the *Langar*, the practice of dining together. The *Dharamsal* initially referred to the place(s) sanctified by the Sikh Gurus or the persons associated with them. The formation of such religious assemblies at places associated with the Sikh Gurus or the associations formed by their designated individuals or groups of individuals from time to time came to be known as the *Sangats* or the congregations of the believers of Sikhism. The number of the *Sangats* increased tremendously with the expansion and consolidation of the Sikh Panth under the successors of Guru Nanak. Thus, the spirit of all these institutions certainly lies in the content and thought of the Sikh Scripture.

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Under the successors of Guru Nanak, the Sikh institutions further grew in terms of number and influence. Guru Angad not only modified the *Gurmukhi* script but also made it more popular among his contemporaries. Thus it acted as an effective instrument to the making of the Sikh Scripture. Guru Amar Das gave further impetus to the growth of Sikh Panth by adding the institution of *Manjis* (bedstead) i.e. the centers primarily meant for the missionary work. The holder of the *Manji* was known as the *Manjidar*. Moreover with a view to the growing needs of the Sikh community, Guru Ram Das added a new dimension to the institutional developments of the Sikh faith by appointing the *Masands* (from Arabic word *Masnad* meaning an authorized or commissioned missionary of the Gurus) who now were also directed to collect offerings or the *Daswandh* (the tithe or one tenth of the earnings) from the Sikhs and to deposit the collected amount to the Guru's treasury. As with the passage of time, the *Masands* grew corrupt, the institution was ultimately abolished by Guru Gobind Singh.

Impact of the Gurbani or the Sikh Scripture on the social life of the Sikhs as it has grown over a period of time is clearly discernible from the institution of marriage as it is performed in the Sikh way of life through the practice of the *Lavan* (the act of circumambulating around the sacred scripture) and the whole ceremony is termed as the *Anand* marriage in the Sikh usage. During the marriage four stanzas of Guru Ram Das's *Suhi*

*chhant* (GGS, pp 773-774) are sung to solemnize the occasion; not only this, the Sikhs also continue to observe some social rights and ceremonies concerning birth and death in accordance with the message of Sikh Scripture.

The central institution of the Harimandar Sahib and the pre-empt institution of the *Akal Takhat* (the throne of the immortal) built by Guru Hargobind immediately facing the Harmandar Sahib are the real manifestations or true representatives of the ideology of the Sikh Scripture i.e. the *Miri-Piri* system of life as lived and experienced by the Sikh Gurus themselves. These two institutions continue even today to fulfill the socio-religious and political purposes of the Sikh community.

The institution of the Order of the *Khalsa* (the pure having direct relation with the Guru) founded by Guru Gobind Singh on the *Baisakhi* day of 1699 C.E. was primarily meant to serve the cause of the righteous against injustice or favour the cause of the good against evil as envisioned by the Guru himself. The undying spirit of the Khalsa and its symbolism undoubtedly has played very crucial role as a great catalyst or the driving force in the history of the Sikhs and their religion even at times of very odd eventualities. The force that works behind all this and several other institutions of the Sikhs as stated above is, no doubt, the noble spirit and the message of the Guru Granth Sahib.

## **HISTORY AND TRADITION OF EXEGESIS WITH REFERENCE TO GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

*Inderjeet Kaur &  
Dr. Jatinder Singh*

An interpretation is a term known as *Tafsir* in Arabic as well as in Persian literature and exegesis in English. It was an important tradition in the field of literary studies and even today it is essential as a basic measurement for the interpretation of any text. It centres around studies on the original text of a Scripture. Interpretation or exegesis is needed because of the usage of esoteric terms and revealed experiences contained in the words of a Scripture. Sometimes a literary work or a text needs much more detailed descriptive commentary as compared to simple interpretation. In sum, an exegesis, interpretation or commentary help the reader in understanding a text containing author's subjective mystical experience of the Divine communicated through use of various metaphors and symbols. From the local to the global level, interpretation is more than ever an important and much debated part of modern life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

Hermeneutics is becoming more and more a living and challenging issue in religious discussions. It is true to say that religions can survive and flourish only through a meaningful hermeneutics i.e., the relevant interpretation of their Scriptures. On the one hand, the origins of religions lie in the distant past and most of their sacred books were originally in languages which have now become obsolete. We can thus come into contact and understand with these religions and their sacred books only through their interpretation. Thus the sacred books are at once ancient and contemporary; incarnate in a particular form, they claim to speak to all generations; circumscribed in language and cultural perspective, they lay claim to universality. The dynamics of this tension between the past and the present, between particularism and universalism constitute the task of hermeneutics today.



**History and Purpose of Exegesis:**

It is often said that the interpretation of a Scripture begins soon after its compilation. The same is true in the context of the Guru Granth Sahib also. For a true interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism, the Sikh Gurus themselves have explained how to understand and interpret the Bani or its belief system. As it is evident from the Sikh history, the most important school of interpretation originated during the lifetime of the Gurus themselves. Apart from the Gurus, the first effort to interpret the Gurbani was made by Bhai Gurdas. It is said that when the Guru Granth Sahib was installed in the Harimander Sahib, the practice of exposition of Gurbani was also started. Since then, the tradition of interpretation has continued in one form or the other.

Guru Nanak, in his hymns, has clearly laid down the roadmap to arrive at the ultimate objective of human life: the goal of life is to realize the Will of God. It can be realized by becoming in tune with His Will i.e. to identify one's will with the Divine Will. The approach emphasized here is more practical than academic. This is the unique feature of the Sikh faith which cannot be ignored for the perception and interpretation of Gurbani. Consequently, in Sikhism, the unity of the spiritual experience of the Gurus, their ideology and their deeds, has to be accepted in order to grasp true meaning of their utterances.

Religion, in the words of Rudolf Otto, is based on the experience of the Numinous. The same is enshrined in the Scriptures. Since the experience of the Numinous is primarily non-rational, the nature of the scriptural language is mostly symbolic, metaphorical and allegorical. In order to make the mystical experience intelligible and accessible to the common man, to make a convincing explanation, the interpretation of the Scripture is needed. The purpose of the exegesis is not only to interpret the religious experience but also to relate this eternal message to every new historical situation. Exegesis thus aims at providing a comprehensive study of the Scripture from the philosophical, literary, theological, philological and comparative perspectives.<sup>2</sup>

A significant purpose of exegesis is to understand the religious personality of the writer as manifested in every single word, to look from the details to the whole, and from the standpoint of the whole to set the details in their true light. To understand the ideas or mind of the author is another major purpose of exegesis because without this understanding

it is impossible to make a text comprehensive to the present reader. It is easy to repeat verbally what one has heard, but difficult to reproduce it in its true sense; and unless every detail is brought out by a good paraphrase something will usually be lost. The task of conveying the thought in another language presents special difficulties. The translation must not be slavishly literal nor yet merely a free rendering of the sense, but must be in keeping as much with the genius of the original text as with that of the foreign language. The fixing of the true text is the important task or responsibility of an exegete.

The central task of the exegesis is completed by answering three questions: (1) What is the theological (allegorical) meaning? (2) What is its moral (tropological) meaning? (3) What is its eschatological (anagogic) meaning?<sup>3</sup> The mystical meaning of a Scripture cannot be discovered by following the literal interpretation. So to remain only on the literal level is to keep oneself in darkness, or to keep oneself away from the anagogic meaning which is purposely the real meaning, the allegorical sense is said to be lying behind the literal sense; the tropological sense is that kind of interpretation whereby a reader finds a moral lesson in the words, and in the anagogical sense the meaning is raised from earthly subjects to heavenly.<sup>4</sup>

### **Meaning and Need for Exegesis:**

Exegesis is the consonance of Word and Consciousness. The exegesis is related with the philosophy, ideology, history, society, culture, etc. Due to its vastness of field, it becomes difficult to give the correct and universal definition of exegesis. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word exegesis means, iAn exposition, especially of a Scripture; a gloss, an explanatory note or discourse.î<sup>5</sup> Its literal meaning is a critical explanation or interpretation of Scripture<sup>6</sup> and a literary commentary which is that branch of theology which deals with the interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures. The word has been derived from the Greek word *ēxegeesthai*, (to explain ex-out, *egeesthai*, to guide) which literally means to explain or to guide.<sup>7</sup> In its original sense, it is a form of explanation, exposition, a critical analysis, and interpretation of the Scripture and to bring to the surface the hidden meanings of the message otherwise unknown of the terms contained in the Scriptures. We also find some other terms which are synonyms to exegesis, e.g., interpretation, exposition and explanation etc. Hermeneutics is a comprehensive term which includes the meaning of all these terms in its scope.<sup>8</sup> According to Richard E. Palmer, hermeneutics has been

developed into an independent discipline for formulating universally valid rules of interpreting Scripture since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He further defines Hermeneutics saying that it is not a science of explanation but rather of understanding.<sup>9</sup>

Thinking, speaking and writing are three marvelous gifts which man possesses. A work of literature is not an object we understand by conceptualizing or analyzing it; it is a voice we must hear and through 'hearing' (rather than seeing) understand.<sup>10</sup> There are several reasons which demand the powerful need of exegesis. Firstly the composer of the Scripture whatever he composes does so in rapturous mood, being in complete union with Almighty. He dwells not only on the physical level but becomes the denizen of celestial regions as well. The mystic experience he achieves is conveyed through symbols which underneath carry the different meanings from those at the surface level. Thus the symbolic meanings are beyond the comprehension of layman as well as scholar. Secondly, like every living organ, language also develops with the passage of time. It changes with the passage of time and some old words become obsolete and their meanings become vague and sometimes even different. The new words come into use in place of the old ones as Dr. Piar Singh holds the change is the nature of language with time and space.<sup>11</sup> In the modern world, the science and technologies are rapidly developing thereby effecting a change in the thinking and attitude of the people. In order to meet the new challenges, the interpretation of the Scripture becomes necessary. Thirdly, an exposition of the Scripture is needed not only because of the symbolic language but also because of the nature of spiritual experience. Almost whole of the scriptural lore is the result of the devotional and intuitional set of mind. The resultant problem of comprehension ensues. For the reasons enumerated above, Scriptures need the exegesis to become intelligible to common man. According to R.E. McNally, their exposition and interpretation is of great import to set forth and explain their full thoughts.<sup>12</sup> Another significant reason is to give authentic and relevant information to the coming generations about the philosophy, history, culture etc., of their religion.

### **Forms of Exegesis:**

Since every religion has its own exegetical tradition, we find some exegetical literature in all the religions. The only purpose behind these commentaries, as we have already mentioned, is to explain the esoteric

meaning of a text to the present reader. In fact, exegesis is an effort to bring together both the subjective and objective dimensions of interpretations. The concepts like exegesis, exposition, explanation, interpretation, etc., are different in their nature and form but all are related to the interpretation or exegesis. Somehow all these become integral parts of the interpretation. It can also be said that these are the integral parts of interpretation.

In the same way, the exegetical literature has its own forms or types. *Teekas*, *Viakhias*, *Bhashayas*, *Paramarthas*, *Padarthas*, etc., are the various forms of exegesis in Sikhism. *Teeka* or exegesis is the common inclusive term used for exegetical works. Its etymological meaning is explanation or a commentary<sup>13</sup> and it explains the meanings of a text in brief. *Viakhia* or exposition is that form of exegetical literature in which the exegete endeavors to bring out the meaning in greater detail. In it, along with the word meaning, central idea and meaning of a hymn is explained in the context of total composition and personal comments and, where necessary, the cogent sources of other exegetical literature are given. Actually, it is the study of a given text in totality from various aspects. The *Bhashya* is a form of *Viakhia* to some extent. Its main stress is on the obscurities involved in the writing. Like the *Viakhia*, the exegesis in *Bhashya* intends to add certain elements from the outer sources to explain and explicate the meanings more clearly. *Paramarth* literally means spiritual meaning, the meaning other than the literal one of a text. We find this mode employed in the *Puranic* literature from which it came into Sikh exegetical literature during the Udasi or Nirmala saints' endeavor of Sikh exegesis. The exegete explains and explores the essential inner content of the text sometimes for the purpose of clarification, sometimes to strike a rapport with his audience or readers. The writer intends to go deep into the layer of the meaning of the words and bring hidden meanings to the surface. *Padarth* literally (*pad+arth*) are the word meanings, i.e., the literal meaning in the form of synonyms.<sup>14</sup>

The truth of the Scripture as we all know is the eternal truth. It needs interpretation in order to relate the eternal truth to mundane historical situation. The twentieth century Sikh scholars were attempting to explain the eternal message of the Gurbani in the context of the first half of this century. These scholars, on the one hand, have been responding to and rebutting the Western challenges by interpreting the Sikh doctrines and practices in the light of Western modes of interpretation. They adopted their methodology but defended the unique features and status of the Sikh

religion. On the other hand, they have been striving hard to maintain the distinct identity of the Sikh doctrine and practice in the face of chauvinistic designs which sought to disapprove the claim of Sikh religion as a distinct revealed faith. The interpretation of this period is, therefore, a departure from the traditional interpretation. It is maintaining its continuity as it is based on the eternal message of the Gurbani but it is also departure as it has been using the new tools and modes of interpretation to respond to the new challenges facing the Sikh religion.<sup>15</sup>

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## **EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH SOURCES ON THE SIKHS**

*Ms. Ramnik Aurora*

The earliest known contemporary account by any European, which refers to the Sikhs, has been discovered to be a letter which was written from Lahore by Father Jerome Xavier, S. J., dated the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1606. This letter by the Jesuit missionary which refers to the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev was later translated into Portuguese and English and published.<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century, a contemporary account which refers to the arrest and massacre of the Sikhs is found in a letter dated Delhi, March 10, 1716.<sup>2</sup> This account forms part of the official letter written by John Surman and Edward Stephenson, who constituted the Embassy of the British Governor of Fort William at the court of the Mughal emperor Farrukh Siyar.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter commercial and political interests of the European companies trading in the Indian subcontinent went up which in return brought many Europeans to India who have left behind a considerable mass of written accounts of their voyages. These accounts are of seminal significance because they provide a peep into the outside image of the Indian culture. The present study seeks to highlight the writings of French travelers of the eighteenth century because they provide significant information about the French image of the Sikhs and their religion.

With regard to the French writings which refer to the Sikhs, their religion, beliefs and customs, let us first take a look at some of the writers who came to India in the eighteenth century and examine briefly their writings to find whether they wrote about the Sikhs and if so, what the nature of their writings was. This is academically very important, as we shall find out later on that these writers and their accounts became the basis of the opinion formed in France and elsewhere in Europe about the Sikhs. Afterwards these accounts served as sources of information for the travelers who followed their predecessors. In many cases, these sources led to misinformation and prejudices against the Sikhs, as they had relied

upon second-hand information in the first place. That may be the reason why the travelers who came to India in the nineteenth century wrote what they did: in their zeal to be well-informed and prepared beforehand, they had read all the literature available to them before they embarked on their journey.

The French travelers who visited India in the eighteenth century came from various backgrounds and with various motives. While some were missionaries, others were merely adventurers who wished to make a fortune in the country they had heard or read so much about. Yet others were traders or officers and administrators. According to Roger Glachant, the Indian adventure was an obsession in France, even if the literature of that time hardly makes much of it.<sup>4</sup> To name a few of the travelers who came to India during the eighteenth century we take the help of a list which Guy Deleury has provided in his anthology of French travelers.<sup>5</sup> Deleury has also mentioned the period of stay of these Frenchmen:

Jean Law de Lauriston	1742-1761
Joseph Tieffenthaler	1743-1785
Ren� Madec	1750-1778
Fran�ois-Xavier Wendel	1751-1803
Jean-Baptiste Gentil	1752-1778
Abraham Anquetil-Duperron	1755-1762
Louis de F�derbe de Modave	1757-1777
Antoine-Louis-Henri Polier	1758-1788
Alexandre Legoux de Flaix	1769-1788
Pierre Sonnerat	1774-1781

Of these travelers some of them do not find mention in the present study as no reference to the Sikhs or Sikhism was found in their writings. Law de Lauriston was a commercial agent of the East India Company, whereas Joseph Tieffenthaler, Paulin de Barth l my, Jean-Antoine Dubois and Fran ois-Xavier Wendel were missionaries. Anquetil Duperron was a scholar who was interested in the study of Indian books, the Parsis and their religious texts and rites. Ren  Madec, Modave, Jean-Baptiste Gentil and Antoine-Louis-Henri Polier pursued a military career and fought in the armies of various Indian princes and nawabs or for the French and English.



We find that often there were European mercenaries in the armies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century India. Pierre Sonnerat was a naturaliste-administrator, Collin de Bar a magistrate and Legoux de Flaix a military engineer. Upon analysis of the written works of these travelers, we find that many of them mention the Sikhs even if they did not meet any of them.

**Jean-Law de Lauriston**, who was a commercial agent but fought in the armies of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, wrote his account of India at that time and his main work, *li...tat politique de liInde en 1777* includes a description of the power of the Sikhs, their government and their military organization.<sup>6</sup> He is also the author of *MÉmoire sur quelques affaires de liEmpire mogol*<sup>7</sup> in which he describes the Sikhs as *Secks* or *Seyques*. He observes about the Sikhs:

People who inhabit the Penjab and a large part of Moulton today.

. . .

Disciples of a philosopher from Thibet, sworn enemies of all monarchies, they have formed a kind of republic divided into tribes independent of each other, but who reunite at the least indication for their common welfare.<sup>8</sup>

Like Law, **Gentil** also describes the power of the Sikhs whom he calls the followers of the sect of *Nanek*. He has also given an account of their history and rise as well as their customs. However, it was Duperron who commented upon his *Papiers historiques* published by Jean Bernoulli in *Description Historique et GÉographique de liIndoustan*.<sup>9</sup> A contemporary scholar, Anquetil Duperron, who stayed with Law for some time, has written about the Sikhs whom he did not meet. He has mainly commented on the manuscripts passed on to him by Gentil and published by Jean Bernoulli.<sup>10</sup>

As for **Modave**, who chose a military career, came to India to seek a fortune and met Madec also during his travels. He is the author of several works describing the Moghul Empire and the situation in India during his stay, i.e., the period 1757 onwards till his death in 1777. He says about the Sikhs in his *Voyage en Inde* (1776) that the *Sickes* originate from the *Ragepouts*, but have *shaken off a majority of the superstitions of the ëbrahmesí*. He emphasizes the fact that the Sikhs have been little known



by the Europeans and that at that time, we do not find their name in any of (*our*) accounts. He remarks *«Jusqu'rsent ces Sickes ont Etr peu connus des Europens. On ne trouve leur nom dans aucune de nos relations.»*<sup>11</sup> He also explains why it is so. He says that as they were under rule of the Moghuls, they were hardly distinguished from other Indians. Further, we get an important point which helps us to understand why a false image had been given of the Sikhs. Modave cites the *History of Hindoustan* (1768) written by Mr. Dow, a British engineer, as the reason why even very learned people had formed a wrong idea about the Sikhs by depending upon this book:

*J'ai vu des gens r Bengale, des gens asss instruits des affaires de l'Indoustan qui, sur les mmoires de M. Dow, s'taient fait une trs fausse ide du gouvernement de ces peuples. Il n'est plus rpublicain que celui des Marates»*<sup>12</sup>

This brings us to the significance of the sources the French travellers used to get information. Often, they used the available material on the country, its people and their customs before they undertook the journey and much of this material was available in translated form in France. There were not only travelers but also scholars who wrote articles on India and its peoples based on the information they had gathered. Among these were authors like the great writer-philosopher Voltaire and l'Abb Raynal, author of *les Deux Indes*.<sup>13</sup>

According to Jean Deloche, Modave was a well-informed spirit and philosopher who, we would say, was a specialist of the East Indies. Deloche proves on the basis of a MS# 1765 in the Musum d'Histoire naturelle in Paris that he served as an informer for Voltaire and that probably some passages of the latter's *Fragments sur l'Inde* were inspired by him.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Modave met many Sikhs during his stay and knew many of the well-known people of the time. According to Deloche, each time he was interested in a question, he got solid documentation on it.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, we are sure that whatever he wrote, he wrote from his own experience and discussions with people rather than depending on second-hand information.

**Jean-Baptiste Gentil**, besides the origin and power of the *Sikhs*, has also related their rise in power and how they admit people from all religions into as their own religion. He says that they are always armed and masters

of the province of Lahore, Multan etc. Thus, we have an image of the Sikhs as an armed people during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The account of another contemporary, i.e., **Colonel A.L.H. Polier** is important as it is not a part of another written work, but a paper in its own right. According to Darshan Singh, this paper, *The Siques* or *The History of the Seekers* by Polier which was read on December 20, 1787 before the Asiatic Society of Bengal is perhaps the first known brief account of the Sikh people written by a European.<sup>17</sup> As far as A.L.H. Polier is concerned, he was a bibliophile who loved to collect manuscripts and living among the cultured Europeans like Gentil and General Claude Martin, he was also a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Among his works are his *Mémoires*, though his paper on the Sikhs remains the most important. He has given us an account of the life and customs of the Sikhs and described their food habits and dress. However, like other writers of his time, we find his biased views in it. It has been noted that a few of the European writers including Polier had reflected a strong bias towards the Sikhs.<sup>18</sup> They had labeled the Sikhs as 'the terror and plague' and desired the British to exterminate this 'evil' from India.<sup>19</sup>

Another thing which is significant about Polier is that he had employed Ram Chand, a learned Sikh of Sultanpur to instruct him. According to Guy Deleury, his knowledge of the history of the Sikhs comes from his long friendship with a learned Sikh whom he employed at Lucknow to teach him the mythology of the Indians:

*Ö sa connaissance de l'histoire de ce peuple lui vint surtout de sa longue amitié avec un lettré sikh qu'il embaucha à Lucknow pour lui enseigner la mythologie des Indous.*<sup>20</sup>

Among the collection of manuscripts in Polier's possession, is the *Panjagranthi*, a collection of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib which is now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

**René Madec**, an adventurer, whose main work is his *Mémoires*, has also written about the Sikhs:

*Les Sikhs, qui sont les habitants du Soubah de Lahore, se sont réunis sous la conduite de treize chefs, indépendants les uns des autres, liés cependant par une Confédération générale.*<sup>21</sup>

According to Madec, the Sikhs are inhabitants of Lahore united under the leadership of thirteen chiefs who are independent of each other but bound by a common confederation. He has also traced the origin of their religion and described its principles as well as their power during that time.

Coming to the works of the Christian missionaries of French origin whose names we have mentioned above, they have also written about the Sikhs.

**Tieffenthaler**, the Jesuit who shares a part of his sojourn in India with Anquetil Duperron, kept up a correspondence with him and it is believed that though the latter also made his works known, he might have passed off the Jesuit's works as his own. His main work of interest to us is *Géographie de l'Indoustan*.<sup>22</sup> He has described the customs and practices of the Sikhs as well as of the Parsis, the Muslims and the Brahmans. He says that what he has written is based upon what he has observed with his own eyes and what he has learnt through his conversations with people having knowledge about the subject.

**Fr. Wendel**, the last of the eighteenth century Jesuit priests in India, has several works to his credit, amongst which are several maps and a translation of a part of Jahangir's Mémoires. The main work for which Wendel is known is *Les Mémoires de Wendel sur les Jats, les Pathans et les Sikhs*<sup>23</sup> in which he has written about the origin and expansion of Sikhism, the doctrine of Guru Nanak and the military organization of the Sikhs. He has described their customs and ceremonies like that of initiation in which people from different castes and religious origin are accepted. The history of the Sikh Gurus is also given and historical events like the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali and the sufferings of the Sikhs at the hands of the Muslim tyrants also find mention in it.

Finally, one traveler who came at the end of the eighteenth century deserves our attention, as his works portray the Sikhs in a way which he claims was true to his observation. François Baltazard Solvyns, a painter of Flemish origin, came to Calcutta in 1791 and earned his life as a painter and decorator who also undertook restoration of paintings. Inspired by Sir William Jones, he started work on the project of a collection of 250 etchings depicting the manners, customs and costumes of the 'Hindoos'<sup>24</sup> in which

he includes those of the Sikhs also. According to Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., this collection provides us the first portraits of the Sikhs which had ever been published.<sup>25</sup> There are two etchings which portray the Sikhs. The first one, *À Sici* gives the image of Sikhs as armed soldiers, while the second one, *Nanuk-Punthyí*, is that of a faquir wearing only one shoe and having one mustache. The collection of etchings was not successful and the painter created a fresh series entitled *Les Hindousí* upon his return to France where he had settled. He claims that he has given an accurate representation of his subjects, though the portrayal of the Sikhs by the artist indicates a certain lack of information on his part.

Some other French travelers of the eighteenth century also deserve our attention. The two travelers of the eighteenth century that we have mentioned above, viz., **Pierre Sonnerat** and **Legoux de Flaix** wrote an account of their travels in India, but none of them has mentioned the Sikhs or their religion. Pierre Sonnerat, a naturalist and administrator, did not travel to the North like many of his countrymen who landed on the shores of southern India and often did not go beyond the southern territories. The work of Legoux de Flaix entitled *Essai historique, Géographique et politique sur l'Indoustan, avec un tableau de son commerce*<sup>26</sup> is in two volumes. It is an account of India till 1770 with focus on its trade, as the title also indicates. It is clear that the purpose of the author is not to get knowledge about religions of India, though he does discuss its history. However, the one thing which is of interest in the first volume is the map of *Indoustan* which is attached to it. It indicates the location of *Penjeabe* with its five rivers, *Lahor*, *Cachemir* and *Sirinagar*, though it does not mention the Sikhs anywhere.

After having studied the works of the above-mentioned French authors of the eighteenth century, we find that whether they were travelers, adventurers, scholars or civil and military officers, they made efforts to obtain information about the Sikhs. Even if they did not actually meet any Sikhs, being at places very distant from the areas inhabited by the Sikhs, they still kept themselves informed through contemporary or archival sources, direct or indirect. We find that the sources for these authors were their predecessors or historians as well as their fellow-travelers from France and other countries. Besides, they used the articles published in journals and reviews like the *Journal Asiatique* and *Revue des Deux*

*Mondes*, etc. Almost all of the travelers whose works we have studied wrote that the Sikhs are a warlike people, and described their military organization. They wrote briefly about the rising power of the Sikhs and the origin of their religion, narrating the details of their lifestyle and customs. Some had commented upon the historical developments like the Sikh relations with the Jats of Bharatpur. Out of these authors, the one who made the most detailed observations and conscious endeavour to write about the Sikhs and their religion is Fr. Wendel, whose treatment of the Sikhs along with that of the Jats of Bharatpur and Pathans of North-West Frontier, is of considerable interest for the scholars. In a few of the works, there seem to be some prejudices or ideas passed on from the earlier writings on the Sikhs, like that of the latter being thieves and warlike people, which is due to the sources that these authors depended upon without verifying for themselves the facts. Besides the ones mentioned above, there may be more French authors whose works may surface in the near future. Probably many of the accounts are still buried under the mass of archival material and have remained unnoticed lying in the dark corridors of history.

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## EXEGESIS OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB (AN OVERVIEW)

*R.S. Tak*

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, one of the most profound Scriptures in the world, is an unparalleled multi-dimensional holy text. Its message is universal in nature and eternal in its validity. The Granth is repository of socio-spiritual insights for mankind. It expounds the proper moral code and guidelines for personal and social conduct, paramount for spiritual progress. It sheds light on God, His creation and the timeless technique of God-realization. The hymns are imbued with author's spiritual experience addressed to the people living anywhere in the world to awaken them from slumber to the spiritual truth and inspire them to achieve self-realization that culminates in uniting one with the Absolute Being, the *summum bonum* of human life.

### **Language:**

Apart from hymns of six Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib contains a selection of the compositions of thirty other mystics and devotees from various parts of India, regardless of their religious, social, cultural or vocational backgrounds. The contributors to the Holy volume revealed glory of One Reality and shared existential ontological truths with the masses using the language and thought-form of the day.

The language and idiom of the Guru Granth Sahib reflect the diverse background of the contributors. Primarily based on archaic Punjabi and old Western Hindi, the verbal expression is also enriched by wide-range of vocabulary adopted from Persian, Arabic, Sindhi, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha and other languages to suit Punjabi idiom, script and inflectional system. Presently, the language of the Guru Granth Sahib has become archaic for the modern generation, though at the time it was employed, it was the accepted vehicle of literary expression.

Due to poetic form, philosophical content and linguistic peculiarities of the Guru Granth Sahib, the scriptural text transmitted to the laity required

to be annotated and explained. In consequence arose a whole body of exegetical literature. The starting point is the Sikh scriptural tradition itself. The interpretation of Gurusí word and teachings had begun contemporaneously with them. Successive Gurus clarified, elaborated and expounded in their own verses the meaning of the composition that they had inherited.

### **Exegesis:**

During eighteenth century and up to the last part of the nineteenth, the task of interpreting the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, rested with the *Udasis* and *Nirmalas*. Udasi Sadhu Anandghana wrote during 1795-1802 commentaries of *Japu*, *Arti* [*Gagan mai thaal ravi chand...*], *Onkar* and *Siddha Goshti*. He was followed by Bhai Santokh Singh (*Garbganjani Teeka*) and Pandit Tara Singh Narotam (*Guru Girarath Kosh*). Subsequently a large number of exegeses, glossaries, and translations of some part or of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib have appeared during about four hundred years of its life. Each attempt is appreciable.

### **Teekas in Punjabi:**

*Guru Girarath Kosh* is a dictionary of the Guru Granth Sahib compiled by Pandit Tara Singh Narotam (1822-1891), a Nirmala Sanskrit Scholar of repute. The *Kosh* was completed in AD 1889 and was printed in two volumes at Rajindra Press, Patiala, the first in 1895 and the second in 1898. His other lexicographical and exegetical works include *Vaheguru Shabdarth* (1862), *Teeka Bhagat Bani Ka* (1872), *Teeka Guru Bhav Dipika* (1879), *Shabad Sur Kosh* (1866), *Teeka Sri Raga* (1885) etc, which were completed under the patronage of rulers of Patiala.

A major exegetical work was a commentary encompassing the entire corpus of the Guru Granth Sahib. Raja Bikram Singh ruler of Faridkot (1842-98) commissioned a full scale commentary of the Guru Granth Sahib in Punjabi. Giani Badan Singh Sekhvan prepared the first draft in 1883. It was revised by a synod of Sikh scholars, with Mahant Sumer Singh of Patna Sahib as Chairman. The revision was completed during the time of Raja Bikram Singh, but he did not live long enough to see publication of the work, that he had sponsored. Printing of the first three volumes was completed during the time of Raja Balbir Singh (1869-1906) and the fourth and final during the reign of his successor Maharaja



Brijindar Singh (1896-1918). Second edition of this exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib appeared in 1924. Popularly known as *Faridkot Wala Teeka* of Guru Granth Sahib, reprints of the original were brought out by the Languages Department of Punjab, the first one in the series appearing in 1970.

Giani Bishan Singh (1875-1966) of Khalsa College, Amritsar has also tried his hand on *Teeka* or annotation of the Guru Granth Sahib. Its first volume was published in 1918 and the eighth and the final in 1945. His other exegetical works include *Teeka Bai Varan*, *Teeka Bhagat Bani*, *Teeka Sahaskriti Salok*, *Teeka Kabbir Savaiyye Bhai Gurdas*, etc.

Monumental work of Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), savant scholar and exegete, is a detailed commentary on the Guru Granth Sahib. Its exegesis has been his life-long occupation. He devoted himself to the commentary but could not finish it during his lifetime. The commentary covering 607 pages of the Guru Granth Sahib was edited by his younger brother, Dr. Balbir Singh. It was published in seven volumes, under the title, *Santhaya Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in 1962. It is a very significant exegetical work and gives context of a hymn, meanings of the verses, commentary/exposition and etymology of important words.

Professor Sahib Singh (1892-1977), grammarian and theologian, is known for his erudition and assiduous pursuit of scholarship. He is the author of his most original work, Gurbani *Viakaran*, a textual grammar of the Guru Granth Sahib. No exegetical work since the publication of this book in 1932 has been possible without resort to the fundamental principles enunciated in it. He also employed his scholarship in the monumental ten volume commentary on the Sikh Scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*, published by Raj Publishers, Jullundar during 1962-64. It contains interpretation strictly according to his Gurbani grammar and in Singh Sabha perspectives.

Giani Harbans Singh's *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji: Darshan Nirney Steek* (comparative study) was published in fourteen volumes by Gurbani Sewa Prakashan, Patiala, during 1980-99. In it Gurbani text is distinct in bold font. After each hymn there are words from the text, to be pronounced with or without nasal sound. Meanings of difficult words are given before giving the meaning of each verse. Variations of the meaning of various verses given by different exegetes are reproduced

followed by final interpretation supported by evidences from the Guru Granth Sahib itself. These features make this work unique in its own right.

*Sidhantak-Steek of Sri Guru Granth Sahib* by Singh Sahib Giani Mani Singh was published in eight volumes by Giani Mani Singh Gurmati Sahit Charitable Trust, Sri Amritsar, during 1994-2001. To reveal the mystical meanings of the text, several questions have been posed and then on the basis of the hymn, their complete answers are provided. The original text is in bold font. It is very useful for understanding the essence of the Scripture.

*Arth-bodh Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Punjabi)* by Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi is a five volume *Teeka* of the Guru Granth Sahib. It was published by Arsee Publishers, Delhi in 2007. The text of the Gurbani is on the left-hand page and its verse-wise meanings in Punjabi prose on the right hand page. It speaks about the high level scholarship of its author and the work deserves appreciation. Pages of the standard 1430-page printed volume of the Guru Granth Sahib are given along with the *teeka*-page of each hymn or composition in the table of contents only.

### **Teekas in Hindi:**

*Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahib* rendered into Hindi along with its transliteration into Devnagari script by Dr. Manmohan Sehgal was published by Bhuwan Vani Trust, Lucknow in four volumes in 1982. The transliteration of the text was done in Devnagari by Nand Kumar Awasthi. It is perhaps the first attempt to render the Guru Granth Sahib in National language for the benefit of Hindi-knowing people. The text of the Gurbani is given in bold font before giving Hindi translation of each hymn.

*Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Hindi)* by Dr. Jodh Singh was published in four volumes by the Sikh Heritage Publications, Patiala. It presents text of the Guru Granth Sahib running into 1430 pages and page-wise rendering into Hindi. Introduction to prominent *banis* included in a volume has been given in annexure at the end of each volume. There is an exhaustive 80-page introduction to the Guru Granth Sahib. It covers Sikh philosophy, history and details of *ragas* as also the prominent *banis* and contributors to the Guru Granth Sahib. It will be of immense help for the persons who want to know about the Holy Volume. It is a monumental work rendered into Hindi in a dispassionate and scholarly manner.

*Paryai*, Sanskrit *paryaya* meaning synonym, was a popular title for glossaries explaining terms and difficult words used in the Guru Granth Sahib, which were the forerunners of exegeses of the scripture. Annotation of scriptural writings continued to flourish throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century in the form of *Paryai* (glossaries). The earliest and the best-known are the two volumes by Bhai Chanda Singh. His *Paryai Farsi Padon Ke* is a glossary of Persian words while *Paryai Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Adi* cover all the difficult words and phrases. The two manuscripts appeared in print in 1887-88.

Sadhu Sute Prakashis *Paryai Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji De* was published in two parts at Wazir-i-Hind Press, Amritsar, in 1898. He was a renowned *Udasi* scholar. *Sri Guru Granth Paryai*, a glossary of the difficult words used in the Guru Granth Sahib is an anonymous and undated manuscript preserved in Khalsa College Amritsar under catalogue No.1473. Although the word *Paryai* would signify a glossary or lexicon but this work is not a dictionary in the strict sense of the term. Words chosen for explanation are not listed alphabetically but they are given in the order in which they appear in the text.

Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), a scholar and exegete, revised and enlarged Giani Hazara Singhis (his maternal grandfather) dictionary of the Sikh scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Kosh* originally published in 1898. The enlarged and revised version, published in 1927, gave evidence of Bhai Vir Singhis command of the classical and modern languages as also the science of etymology. Five editions of the *Kosh* were brought out by the Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, and its sixth edition was published in 1995 by Singh Brothers, Amritsar. The *Kosh* was edited and enlarged by Dr. Harbhajan Singh *et al* and published in two volumes by Dr. Balbir Singh Sahit Kendar, Dehradun in 2008.

*Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh* popularly known as *Mahan Kosh (Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature)* by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha is a work unexcelled for refinement of expression and monumental in its scope. He accomplished the gigantic task single-handedly by devoting about fourteen years and it was completed on 16 February 1926. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala offered to bear the entire expenditure on its publication. Its printing started on 13 April 1917 at Sudarshan Press, Amritsar and it was completed in four volumes on 13 April 1930.

Subsequently it was published by the Language Department of Punjab, Patiala in a single volume. *Shabadarth*, an annotated edition of the Guru Granth Sahib was undertaken in 1936 by Gur Sevak Sabha, Amritsar. It was the work primarily of Professor Teja Singh with Bawa Harkishan Singh and Professor Narain Singh lending a helping hand. The *Shabadarth*, a landmark in Sikh exegetical literature was completed in September 1941 and published by SGPC Amritsar in four volumes.

*Nirukat Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (Punjabi) by Dr. Balbir Singh *et al* was published by Punjabi University, Patiala in 1972-2004 in four volumes only. On the expiry of Dr. Balbir Singh, Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi edited Third and Fourth volumes of the *Nirukat* and got them published. It is of immense help for the scholars of Sikhism and the Sikhs interested in understanding the essence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

*Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Hindi Shabadarth* by Dr. Gurdev Kaur and Dr. G.S. Anand was published in four volumes by Punjabi University, Patiala, during 1989-2005. Text of Gurbani is given in Devnagari script on left hand pages and meanings of difficult words and lines are given on right hand pages. It is on the pattern of *Shabadarth* (Punjabi) published by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar.

*Gurbani Katha Veechar* (Punjabi) by Iqbal Singh was published by Chatar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, in 2004. In this book historical and mythological references used in Sri Guru Granth Sahib have been explained in detail. Where needed for clarification *Varan Bhai Gurdas* and his *Kabit Swaiyye* have also been quoted. Complete text of the hymn, where the term occurs in the Guru Granth Sahib, has been given in bold font on left hand page and on the right page its meanings have been given followed by its central idea.

*Guru Granth Vishavkosh* (Punjabi) by Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi was published in two volumes by Punjabi University, Patiala, in 2002. There are about 1700 entries about the Bani and their authors, as also spiritual concepts, historical and Puranic references. It is the first in this genre and provides great help in understanding terminology of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

*A Guru Nanak Glossary* compiled by C. Shackle of University of London was published by Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, in 1981. Words

are given in both Gurmukhi script and Roman transcription, with English definitions and etymologies. It is of immense help for understanding correct meaning of terms used in the Guru Granth Sahib in general and Guru Nanak Bani in particular.

*A Conceptual Encyclopaedia of Guru Granth Sahib* by Dr. S. S. Kohli was published by Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, in the year 1992. Appropriate quotations from the Guru Granth Sahib in support of the interpretation of each entry are given.

Another work of above nature, *Dictionary of Guru Granth Sahib* by Dr. S. S. Kohli was published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar, in 1996. It contains the lexicon of the Guru Granth Sahib in order of Roman alphabet so that English speaking reader could find the required word. Original word from the text has also been given in Gurmukhi script. Etymology of the words and their meanings has been given in simple English. It is a great spiritual treasure to understand the meanings of the important and difficult words from the Scripture.

*Dictionary of Mythological References in Guru Granth Sahib* by Dr. S. S. Kohli was published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar, in 1993. The saint-poets and the Sikh Gurus have made use of mythology not as an article of belief but just to explain some practice or belief. The use of mythology is just illustrative. The book elaborates all these mythological references and narrates their background in an interesting way.

*A Treasury of Mystic Terms* Part I has six volumes. It was compiled by John Davidson and published by Science of the Soul Research Centre, RSSB, Pusa Road, New Delhi in 2003. The primary objective of the *Treasury* is to elucidate the meaning of the essential terms used by different spiritual and religious traditions of the world, including Sikhism. As it is, the spiritual, mystical and religious teachers tend to use certain terms with specific meanings. Everyday words are often adopted acquiring a special meaning in a spiritual text. So in the *Treasury* meanings of the terms from the Guru Granth Sahib have been explained by giving their etymology, meanings based on it and the mystical meanings while giving Gurbani quotes frequently for highlighting its contextual meaning. The *Treasury* is not primarily a dictionary or an encyclopaedia but it appears to be their synthesis.

**Findings:**

The Guru Granth Sahib being poetic in form with philosophical content and linguistic peculiarities, the scriptural text required to be annotated and explained. In consequence there arose a whole body of exegetical literature. The starting point is the Guru Granth Sahib itself. Successive Sikh Gurus clarified, elaborated and expounded in their own verses the meaning of the compositions that they had inherited. There are expository verses of Bhai Gurdas and the prose discourses of Miharban. From eighteenth century up to the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the task of interpreting the Sikh Scripture rested primarily with the Udasis and Nirmalas. But their interpretations are saturated with Upanishadic lore.

With the British patronage, Trumpp's *Adi Granth* in English was published in 1877 and it earned him the reproach of the entire Sikh people. Under the patronage of Faridkot State full scale commentary in Punjabi on the Guru Granth Sahib was prepared and published. Both the traditional and modern scholars devoted their scholarship to produce the exegetics including glossaries, *teekas*, encyclopaedias, *nirukats*, *shabdārths* of the Guru Granth Sahib. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee got prepared monumental *Shabdārth* of the Holy Volume. There were *teekas* in Punjabi and translations of the Sikh Scripture into English and Hindi. Besides the individual scholars, those associated with the Universities in Punjab put in their hard labour in preparation and publication of exegetical works on Sri Guru Grant Sahib.

## ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ : ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ

ਡਾ. ਗੁਲਜ਼ਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੰਗ

ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਦੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ‘ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ’ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ-ਜ਼ਹੂਰ ਤੇ ਜੁਗੋ-ਜੁਗ ਅਟੱਲ ‘ਗੁਰੂ’ ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਾਰਨ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮੂਲਕ ਸਕ੍ਰਿਆ (ਧੇਨਓਮਚਿ) ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਦੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ-ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਚਾਲਕ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਪਰਮਸਤਿ ਹੈ, ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ, ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੀ ਮੁਕਤ-ਦੁਆਰ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਬਦਲ ਹੋ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ- ‘ਬਿਨ ਸਬਦੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਆਨੇਰਾ ॥ ਨ ਵਸਤੁ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਚੁਕੈ ਫੇਰਾ’ ॥<sup>1</sup>

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਿ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ: ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ’ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਤਾ ਹੈ? ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਪੈਗੰਬਰੀ ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ- ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਜਿਸ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਸੀਬ ਹੋਈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ’ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ-ਮਾਰਗ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ-ਮਾਰਗ ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਖ਼ਾਲਸ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਗਹਿਰ-ਗੰਭੀਰ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਨਸੋਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੰਨ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਹੈ: ਸ਼ਬਦ ਖੁਦ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਹੈ, ਦੂਜਾ: ਇਸ ਦਾ ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਤੀਜਾ: ਗੁਰੂ ਅਗੰਮੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਤੋਂ ਹਟ ਕੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਰੋਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲ ਕਦਮੀ ਹੈ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਦਾ ਰਹੱਸਵਾਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜਦ ‘ਹੁਕਮ’ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹੈ, ਜਦ ‘ਜੋਤਿ’ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਦ ‘ਨਾਦ ਧੁਨਿ’ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਹੈ।

‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ਤਕ ਤਿੰਨ ਪੜਾਵੀਂ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਿੰਨੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ-ਵੱਖਰੇ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਰੂਪ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਹੈ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ-ਹੁਕਮ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਪਕਤਾ। ਸਾਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਕਰਤਾ ਦੀ ਹੈਸੀਅਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਚਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਹੋਂਦ ਰਹਿਤ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ, ਚੇਤਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਸੀ, ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੇਟਣ ਪਿੱਛੇ ‘ਸੁੰਨਿ ਸਮਾਧਿ’ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਕਰਤਾਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਰਜਣਕਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾਇ ਵਰਤਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਉਲੇਖ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਸਰਗੁਣ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਮਾਨ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਉਤਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਰੂਪ-ਰੇਖਾ, ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਸੀ। ਸਰਗੁਣ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ, ਕੁਦਰਤ, ਕਾਇਨਾਤ ਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਧੜਕਣ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਗੁਰ-ਵਾਕਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ-

੧. ਸੁ ਸਬਦ ਕਉ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਅਲਖੰ ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਸੋਈ ॥<sup>੩</sup>
੨. ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਤਉ ਅਕੁਲੀਣਿ ਰਹਤਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥<sup>੪</sup>
੩. ਸੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਆਛੈ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਜੋਤਿ ਸੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਲਹੈ ॥<sup>੫</sup>
੪. ਚਹੁ ਦਿਸਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਹੁ ਦਿਸਿ ਨਾਮ ਪਤਾਲੰ ॥  
ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਚਾ ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਬੈਆਲੰ ॥<sup>੬</sup>
੫. ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਕਾ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਰਵਿਆ ਹੈ ਆਪੁ ਗਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥<sup>੭</sup>

ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਅਨੰਤ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਗੁਣ ਹੀ ‘ਗੁਰੂ’ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ‘ਗੁਰੂ’ ਪਦ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਧਰਮ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ (ਏਵਲਓਟੀਨ) ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਹ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ-ਰੂਪ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੁਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਧੀਨ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ (ਜੋ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ) ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ-

੧. ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਦਯੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਚਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੁ ॥  
ਗੁਰਿ ਤੁਠੈ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰ ॥<sup>੮</sup>



੨. ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥  
ਓਹੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥<sup>9</sup>
੩. ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਹਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਸਤ ਸਰੁ ॥  
ਓਹ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦੀ ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ॥<sup>10</sup>
੪. ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਹਜੂਰੇ ॥<sup>11</sup>
੫. ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰਏ ਨਮਹ ॥ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਗੁਰਏ ਨਮਹ ॥<sup>12</sup>

‘ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰਏ’ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਦੀ ਅਫੂਰ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੋਈ (ਭਾਵ ਜੁਗਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ) ਤਾਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਿਰ ਪਰਮ ਹਸਤੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਆਨਣ ਲਈ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਵਿਚ ‘ਸਤਿ ਪੁਰਖ’ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਤਿ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੈ। ਸਤਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਨ ਵਾਲਾ ‘ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ’ ਅਖਵਾਇਆ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਵੀ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜਣਾਇਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਹੈ-

ਸਤਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਿਖੁ ਉਧਰੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥<sup>13</sup>

ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਪਰਤ ਜੋਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਦੇਹ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ। ਇਥੇ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਦ ਦੇਹ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਵਾਂਗ ਦੇਹ ਦੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਬਦੇਹ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰੂਪ’ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਟ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ‘ਪ੍ਰਤਖ ਹਰਿ’ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਰੂਪ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦਾ ਦਰ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ‘ਸਿਧ ਗੋਸਟਿ’ ਰਚਨਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜਦ ਜੋਗੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ’ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ‘ਸੁਰਤਿ’ ਨੂੰ ਚੇਲਾ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸੋਰਠਿ ਰਾਗ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਅਭਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ-

ਤਤੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਾਈ ਸੋਹੰ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ ॥<sup>14</sup>

ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹਰ ਜੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੰਵਾਰਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>15</sup> ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੰਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਦ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਬਿੰਬਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸੰਤ/ਭਗਤ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ 'ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ' ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਰੂਪ-ਰੇਖਾ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਭੱਟ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਗੁਣ, ਸਰਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਟ ਇਕ-ਰੂਪਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਹਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਭੱਟ ਸੱਲ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੋਤਿ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਰੇ ਜੁਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤਦੀ ਸਰਵੱਚ ਸਤਾ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ-ਜੋਤਿ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਹੀ ਧਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਆਪਣੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ 'ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ' ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਿਪੂਰਨ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਹੈ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਨਮ-ਮਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਿਆਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਜੋਤਿ ਨੇ ਜਨਮ-ਮਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>16</sup>

'ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਪੁ ਰਖਿਓਨੁ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੀ ਸਦੀਵਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ-ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚ 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ' ਤੇ 'ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ' ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਕ ਹੋਂਦ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ' ਅਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ 'ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ' ਇਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਦੇਹ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਡਾ. ਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਵਾਨਾ<sup>17</sup> ਇਸੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕ ਹੈ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸੇ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੇ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਾਲਾਧੀਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਇਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਰੂਪ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਢੁਕਵਾਂ ਬਦਲ 'ਜੋਤਿ' ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਟ ਕੇ ਸਤਿ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਾਲ ਤਦਰੂਪ ਸਨ:-

ਬਲਿਓ ਚਰਾਗੁ ਅੰਧਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਸਭ ਕਲਿ ਉਧਰੀ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਧਰਮ॥

ਪ੍ਰਗਟੁ ਸਗਲ ਹਰਿ ਭਵਨ ਮਹਿ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥<sup>18</sup>

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਹ 'ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ' ਪਰਵਰਤੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਰੀਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸੱਤੇ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਭੱਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੱਵਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੇ ਕਾਇਆ ਪਲਟਣ ਦੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਣਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋਈ ਹਰ ਆਤਮਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ? ਅਜਿਹਾ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਭ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਆਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਪੜਾਅ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਪਰਿਪੂਰਨ ਹਸਤੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਆਤਮਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਮਨ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਅਸੀਮਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਸੰਤ ਤਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਦੂਜੀ ਗੱਲ: ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ-ਜੋਤਿ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਥਾਪੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ-ਜੋਤਿ ਆਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਪਰਮਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਜੇ ਆਤਮਾ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਤਦਰੂਪ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਅੰਦਰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮ-ਗੁਣ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ

ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਜੀ, ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਰੂਪ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਤਾਂ ਰਹੇ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਤੀਜੀ ਗੱਲ: ਦੇਹ ਦੇ ਪਧੌਰ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕ ਪਵਿੱਤਰਤਮ ਪਦ ਹੈ, ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਮਨਮਤੀ ਯਤਨ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ‘ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ’ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵੱਸ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਸਾਧ, ਸੰਤ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਲ-ਗੱਡ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੰਨੇ-ਹੰਨੇ ਤੇ ਉਸਰੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਡੇਰੇ ਇਸੇ ਸੋਚ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ-ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਭ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਧ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹਨ: ‘ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਧ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ’ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠਿਆ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਅਦਰਸ਼ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਸਾਧੂ ਦੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਪਰਮਾਰਥੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੀ ਪਦਾਰਥਕ ਖੇਡ ਵਿਚ ਖਚਿਤ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਜੇਕਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਧੂ ਉਹ ਆਤਮਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੀ ਤ੍ਰੈਗੁਣੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ‘ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਉਪਮਾ ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਦੂਰਿ’। ਸੰਤ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਧੂ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਲੇਰਾ ਪੜਾਅ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਿਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਧ ਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਪੜਾਅ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਸਾਧ ਤੇ ਸੰਤ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਅਵਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸੰਤ ਮੁਕਤ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਹੈ ਜੋ ‘ਆਪਾ ਪਰਕਾ ਮਿਟਾ’ ਕੇ ਨਿਗਮ ਤੋਂ ਅਗਮ ਵਿਚ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ‘ਮੁਕਤਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕਾ ਦਾਤਾ’ ਹੈ। ਸੰਤ ਨੇ ਪਰਮਸਤਿ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਸੰਤ ਇਕ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਕਿਸ਼ਤੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ-ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਬੋਹਿਥਾ (ਜਹਾਜ਼) ਹੈ ਜੋ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਵ-ਸਾਗਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰ ਲਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਤ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਥਾਪੜਾ ਦੇਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਿਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੈਵੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਤਹਿਤ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਧਾਰ ਲਈ ਭੇਜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਇਸੇ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਤਹਿਤ ਹੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੇ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਗੁਰੂ-ਜੋਤਿ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ- “ਮੈਂ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਹਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਖਾਲ ਸਕੇ”।<sup>19</sup>

ਸੋ ਇਉਂ ਗੁਰੂ-ਜੋਤਿ ਦਸਾਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਗਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇਹਧਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਵੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸਨ।

‘ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ’ ਦੀ ਤੀਜੀ ਪਰਤ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ-ਜੋਤਿ ਜਦ ਸਰੀਰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਧੁਰ ਨਾਲ ਇਕਸੁਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਉਚਾਰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਉਸ ਦਾ ‘ਬਾਣੀ’ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿੱਥ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਧੁਰ ਰਚਨਹਾਰ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਚਾਰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ; ਜੋ ਉਚਾਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਰਚਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ।<sup>20</sup> ਭਾਵ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਜਾਤ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਨਹੀਂ; ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਇਵੇਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਇਕ ਰੂਪ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ‘ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ’ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਤ੍ਰੈਗੁਣਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਵੀ ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਅਕਾਲੀ (Nontemporal) ਅਤੇ ਅਮੂਰਤ (Non-spacio) ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਕਾਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੀਮਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ- ‘ਬਾਣੀ ਵਜੀ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਣਾਇ’। ਕੁਝ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਉਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਪੂਰਬਵਰਤੀ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਣ ਹੇਠ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਰਵਾਈ। ਇਹ ਮਨ-ਘੜਤ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੁੰਮਣੇ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਭਗਤਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਗੁਰੂ-ਲਿਵ ਦਾ ਉਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਅਮਲ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸੀ। ਇਵੇਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਆਵੇਸ਼ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਉਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰਮੁਖੀ ਨਕਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੋਏ। ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਜੋਤਿ’ (Revelation) ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ-

੧. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ॥<sup>21</sup>
੨. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਬਣੀਐ॥<sup>22</sup>
੩. ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥<sup>23</sup>

ਤ੍ਰੈਗੁਣਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਪਤ ਬਾਣੀ ‘ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ’ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ‘ਕੱਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ’<sup>24</sup> ਪਰਵਾਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਜੋ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਤੇ ਪੁੱਜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਮਸਤਿ ਦਾ ਨਿੱਜ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਦੇਹ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਰਗਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਅਕਤਿਤਵ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਹਿਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ‘ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ’ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਤਦਰੂਪ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਪਦ ਲਈ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਿਥੇ ਕਾਇਆ ਪਲਟਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ‘ਪੋਥੀ’ ਦੀ ਸੋਪਨਾ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ੧੬੯੯ ਈ: ਵਿਚ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ‘ਦੇਹ’ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ

ਅਤੇ ੧੭੦੮ ਈ: ਨੂੰ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾਉਣ ਸਮੇਂ ‘ਜੋਤਿ’ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਵਲੀਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਦੇਹ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੋਤਿ ਦਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਮਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਰਤਦਾ।

ਅੱਜ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਹਦ ਅਤੇ ‘ਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ ਜ਼ਹੂਰ’ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਨ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਭ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਆਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਦੇਹਧਾਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਸਫਰ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਕੇਂਦਰਿਤ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਖਿਚੋਤਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਜਗਿਆਸੂ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਵਿਚ ਫਸ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਜੋਤਿ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ’ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਮਾਨ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ‘ਬੀੜ’ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਥੂਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਵਿਚਾਰਨੀ ਅਤਿ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਮਜ ਭਰਿਆ ਅੰਤਰ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਜੁਗੋ ਜੁਗ ਅਟੱਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਭਾਵ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਤ ਸਥੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਲਕਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਰੂਪ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗਿਆਨ ਰੂਪ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸਰਵਕਾਲੀ, ਸਰਵਦੇਸੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸੰਪਾਦਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਉੱਤੇ ਲਾਗੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਥੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੀੜ ਨੇ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਆਹੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਜਿਲਦ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਆਦ ਪਗਾਉਣੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਭਰੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਰਧ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਸਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ‘ਸ਼ਬਦ’ ਦਾ ਸਸਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਇਹ ਕਾਰਜ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਥੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਪਾਦਤ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਵੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ‘ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰੀ ਬੀੜ’ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਣ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਇਕ ਘਰਾਣੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਬੀੜ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਮਲਕੀਅਤ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸਥੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਥਾਜੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਚਾਰ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਲਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਰੂਪੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਣਗਿਣਤ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਪਧੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਰੂਹ ਦੇ ਪਧੌਰ ਤੇ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰੂਹ ਤਕ ਅਪੜਨ ਲਈ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ‘ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ’ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਦੇਹ ਦੇ ਪਧੌਰ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਤੇ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਕਰਮ-ਕਾਂਡੀ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਵੀ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਇਥੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਪਰ ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇਹ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਬਾਣੀ ਉਚਾਰਦੇ ਹੀ ਨਾ, ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੇ ਹੀ ਨਾ, ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਕੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਸੀ? ਇਹ ਹੈ ਦੇਹ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇਡੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਜੋ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਹੰਢਾਉਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਬੁੱਧ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੇ ਸਨ- “ਦੇਹ ਨਾਸ਼ਵਾਨ ਹੈ, ਆਪਾਂ ਹੁਣ ਵਿਛੜਾਂਗੇ। ਮੇਰੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇ ਜੋ ਕੰਮ ਲੱਗਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਮੈਂ ਕਰ ਚਲਿਆਂ ਹਾਂ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਬੁੱਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਂ, ਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਆਖਰੀ ਬੁੱਧ ਹਾਂ। ਸੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਉੱਤਰਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੌਤਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹੇਗਾ, ਬੁੱਧ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬੁੱਧ ਸੱਚ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸੱਚ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਰਦਾ”।<sup>25</sup> ਇਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਕਹੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਿਲਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਰ- ਵਾਰ ਵਿਛੜਾਂਗੇ, ਜੇਕਰ ਰੂਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਿਲਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਦਾ ਮਿਲੇ ਰਹਾਂਗੇ। ਰੂਹ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਹਿਰਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਰ ਕੇ ‘ਨਾਮੁ ਧੁਨਿ’ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਦੇਹ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰੇ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ-

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥<sup>26</sup>

ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਦਰਸ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਬਣ ਜਾਵੇ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਬਾਹਰਮੁਖੀ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਦਾ ਸਫ਼ਰ ਹੈ।

ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਇਹ ਸ਼ੰਕਾ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਅੰਦਰ ਤਾਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦਾ ਪੁੰਜ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹਨ? ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦਾ ਵਜੂਦ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ (ਓਮਬੋਦਮਿਣਟ) ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਅਸਲ ਵਜੂਦ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਠਤੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਗਠਤੀ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਵਿਚ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਮ ਅੱਖ (ਓਣਸੋ ਡ ਢਲਓਸਹ) ਮੂੰਹ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਦਿੱਬ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਭਾਸਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀ ਭੀਤ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰੱਹਸ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਹੀ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਹਉਮੈ ਦੇ ਅਭਾਵ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਬਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ-ਆਪੇ ਦਾ ਅਸਲੀ ਵਜੂਦ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਫੁਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ:-

ਸਮੁੰਦੁ ਵਿਰੋਲਿ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਹਮ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਇਕ ਵਸਤੁ ਅਨੂਪ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਭਾਈ ॥<sup>27</sup>

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਕੇਵਲ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕਣ ਤਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ-ਜ਼ਹੂਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਾ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ (ਓਂ ਡ ਲਡਿਏ) ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ‘ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਲਹਿ ਇਆਨੇ’ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ‘ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ’ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਰਗਾ ਸਮਝ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਲਈ

ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਹਕਰਮੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਜਨ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚੋਜ ਵਰਤਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੇਹ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜਲਾਲ ਤੇ ਜਮਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਫੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਛਾਣਨ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਧੀਵਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ 'ਖਾਲਸਾ' ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਵੀ ਦੇਹ ਅੰਦਰ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨਾਲ ਵਰਸੋਈ ਰੂਹ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਸੀ। 'ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ' ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਤੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਕਿ ਕੌਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਬੁੱਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਰਹੇ ਤੇ ਰੂਹਾਨੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਸਦ-ਤਾਜ਼ਗੀ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਮਾਣੇ।

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੩. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ.੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੪.
੪. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੫.
੫. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੪੫.
੬. ਉਹੀ, ਮਲਾਰ ਮ.੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੭੫.
੭. ਉਹੀ, ਆਸਾ ਮ.੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੩੫੧.
੮. ਉਹੀ, ਗਉੜੀ ਮ.੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੨੧੮.
੯. ਉਹੀ, ਸੂਹੀ ਮ.੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੭੫੯.
੧੦. ਉਹੀ, ਆਸਾ ਮ.੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੩੯੭.
੧੧. ਉਹੀ, ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ.ਲ, ਪੰਨਾ ੮੦੨.
੧੨. ਉਹੀ, ਗਉੜੀ ਮ.੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬੨.
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੧੫. ਆਪੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਆਪਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਜੀਉ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਭਗਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥  
ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਭਗਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਸਵਾਰੇ ਆਪੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਏ ॥  
(ਗਉੜੀ ਮ.੩, ਪੰਨਾ ੨੪੬)
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ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਸਾਧਿਕ ਸਿਧ ਸਿਖ ਸੇਵੰਤ ਧੁਰਹ ਧੁਰੁ ॥  
ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਕਲਾ ਧਾਰੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਲੋਅਹ ॥  
ਅਗਮ ਨਿਗਮ ਉਧਰਣ ਜਰਾ ਜੰਮਿਹਿ ਆਰੋਅਹ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਅਮਰਦਾਸਿ ਬਿਰੁ ਥਪਿਅਉ ਪਰਗਾਮੀ ਤਾਰਣ ਤਰਣ ॥

ਅਘ ਅੰਤਕ ਬਦੈ ਨ ਸਲ੍ਹ ਕਵਿ ਗੁਰ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਰਣ ॥

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