



ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oāṅkāṛ saṭ nām kartā purakh nīrbhāo nīrvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhān gur parsād.



THE SIKH BULLETIN GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI

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GUEST EDITORIAL

[Editor's Note: Principal Sawan Singh Gogia's articles have appeared in the Sikh Bulletin from its inception. This article by him so well encapsulates my view of Guru Nanak's philosophy so well that I present this to the readers as Guest Editorial]

GURU NANAK'S UNIQUE IDEOLOGY

Guru Nanak's ideology is unique in many ways. He was among the first Scientist Philosophers who rejected faith based philosophies with reason based dialogue. He linked the personal salvation of a man with his social salvation and this linkage is of immense and revolutionary importance. Guru Nanak's personal experience is unique and quite different from the other systems prevalent in India. He chose the householder's life for personal growth, raised his voice for the uplift of women and against the cruel rulers and invades.

Guru Nanak's Concept of 'God'

Guru Nanak's concept of 'God' in other religions is summed up in the basic formula called the commencing verse of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in which Nanak has used the Panjabi word **Kartar**, in English **Creator**, to describe what Christianity calls **God**, Muslims **Allah** and multiple names by Hindus. Panjabi and English languages are members of the **Indo-European language family**. Kartar in Panjabi and Creator in English mean exactly the same thing. Consonants give sound to the words. The **consonants** in **Kartar** and **Creator** are exactly the same in both languages. If you remove the vowels we are left with **KRTR** in Panjabi and **CRTR** in English.

In all religions 'God' is shown as masculine but in Guru Nanak's philosophy Kartar/Creator has no human attributes. Hence in this article word 'God' would be replaced by **Kartar/Creator** and He, Him and His with **It, Its and You**.

For Guru Nanak, Kartar/Creator is both Transcendent and Immanent. Guru Nanak says Kartar/Creator is both visible and invisible. It is invisible because It is Un-manifest and Unapproachable. It is Manifest because It abides within all the beings:

ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਰਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ
ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹਿ। (SGGS:13)
*'You have thousands of eyes,
and yet You have no eyes.
You have thousands of forms,
and yet You do not have even one.'*

In the eyes of Guru Nanak Kartar/Creator is Creative, Benevolent and Gracious:

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (SGGS: 8)
'The Formless Kartar/Creator abides in the realm of Truth. Having created the creation, It watches over it. By Its grace It bestows happiness.'

According to Guru Nanak the world is not only real but it is a meaningful place where only Kartar/Creator's will works and an ideal life for man is to live according to the will of the Kartar/Creator:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (SGGS: 1)
'Everyone is subject to Its Command, the Laws of Nature; no one is beyond Its Command.'

Universal Love

Guru Nanak led us on the path of universal love and taught us to forget the distinction of caste and creed. He wanted to establish equality and fraternity among human beings. From the start of his mission he laid stress on social equality and brotherhood. His first words after his enlightenment that there is **neither 'Hindu nor Muslim'** are extremely meaningful. There was no

Hindu and no Musalman in His eyes. He advocated that **we are all children of the same Kartar/Creator:**

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ (SGGS:350)
Sahib mera aeko Hai Bhai---
*'My Master is One; It is the One and Only
symbolized as ੴ, One Kartar/Creator.'*

Guru Nanak reiterated his firm belief in the equality of all human beings and their fundamental rights. Guru Nanak writes that Kartar/Creator's light pervades in everyone and is radiant within all:

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ।
ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ। (SGGS: 13)
'Amongst all is the Light-You are that Light. By this Illumination that Light is radiant within all.'

He spoke against caste system both by percept and example. He chose to dine and live with persons of low caste like *Bhai Lalo* and ignored the invitation of a rich landlord, *Malik Bhago*. He believed in humanity and aimed at creating a casteless society. He established the institution of *Langar, Sangat and Pangat* so that his disciples sat and ate together. During his missionary tours, his sole companion was a low caste Muslim, *Mardana*:

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ (SGGS:8)
karamee aapo aapanee kae naerrai kae dhoor
According to their own actions, some are drawn closer, and some are driven farther away from Kartar/Creator.

He taught us dignity of labor and advocated honest earning, sharing with the needy:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥ (SGGS:1245)
'One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has, O Nanak, knows the right way.'

He rejected monasticism and begging:

ਗੁਰੂ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥(SGGS: 1245)
Gur pir saddai mangan jaae ॥

Guru Nanak was humility personified:

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ॥
(SGGS:15)

'Nanak seeks the company of the lowest of the low, the very lowest of the low. Why should he try to compete with the high?'

Householder's Life and Dignity of Labor

Guru Nanak completely rejected asceticism, renunciation and withdrawal from life. After completing his missionary tours, Guru Nanak settled at Kartarpur as a householder and worked as a peasant in this commune. He advised his successor, Guru Angad, to settle at Khadur Sahib with his family. His mission was salvation of the whole society and not the salvation of a few. We find no ascetics among his followers; rather the ascetics were deliberately excluded. Guru Nanak condemned Yogis for being idlers and not being ashamed of begging from householders whose life they criticized:

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਤ ਲਾਜ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥(SGGS:903)
ghar ghar maagath laaj n laagai ॥1॥ rehaao ॥
'You beg from door to door, and you don't feel ashamed.'

To Guru Nanak truthful living is higher than the truth itself:

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ॥ (SGGS:62)
Sachahu ourai sabh ko oupar sach aachaar

Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living.

According to Guru Nanak's ideology, our deeds in this world will determine our nearness to the Kartar/Creator.

'Do not touch the feet of a person who calls himself a guru or a spiritual teacher, while he goes around begging.'

Status of Women in Society

Guru Nanak was the first man who raised his voice for the uplift of women more than 500 years ago when other religions were treating and are still treating women as inferior to men. In some religions, she was considered a hurdle in the path of heaven and sin-born. In Catholic Christianity women have not been made priests even up till today. Guru Nanak said why call woman impure when she gives birth to great men and without woman there would be none:

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥(SGGS:473)
'So why call her bad from whom great men are born?'

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥(SGGS:473)

From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. Guru Nanak says that only Kartar/Creator is born without women.

Criticism of the Cruel Rulers and Invaders

Guru Nanak's ideology did not allow him to remain silent against the unjust rulers and cruel invaders. He openly and fearlessly raised his forceful voice against them and awakened the oppressed people. In his eyes these cruel rulers were like fierce tigers and their ministers behaved like mad dogs who oppress the innocent people:

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ
॥(SGGS: 1288)

"The kings are like tigers, and their underlings like dogs: they prey upon innocent unwary people, plundering them."

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥
(SGGS:145)

'The Dark Age of Kali Yuga is the knife, and the kings are butchers; righteousness has sprouted wings and flown away.'

About Babar, the mighty Mughal invader, he remarked:

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥
(SGGS: 722)

"Bringing the 'marriage party of sin', Babar invaded from Kabul, demanding our land as his wedding gift, O Lalo."

Guru Nanak's criticism was loud and serious, and not an empty rhetoric. He even criticized Kartar/Creator for allowing the oppression of the weak to take place:

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥
(SGGS: 360)

'There was so much slaughter that the people agonized, didn't You feel compassion, O Kartar/Creator?'

Combination between the personal life of a man and his empirical life was first established by Guru Nanak. According to Guru Nanak, kingdom of Kartar/Creator is not in a mythological heaven, but on this earth and we make our life hell or heaven by our own actions in this life. The guru directs us to give up our egocentric activities and rise to be a superman. His ideology is to establish link between the individual salvation and the social salvation of a man. It is for belief in both the transcendence and immanence of Kartar/Creator. Guru Nanak's mission was to ferry human beings across the turbulent sea of life. Guru Nanak's ideology is, **'give up mammon and not the world.'**

The Institution of Succession

An important feature of Guru Nanak's ideology is the appointment of a successor who was given

clear instructions to organize a society as directed by him. Guru Nanak's mission of social salvation of mankind and casteless society would have remained unfulfilled if he had not established the institution of succession which ended with the creation of the *Khalsa* by the tenth master who followed in the footsteps of Guru Nanak and faithfully upheld the broad principles of Guru Nanak's philosophy.

Bhatt Satta and Balvand have rightly said about Guru Nanak's successors:

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥(SGGS: 966)

'They shared the One Light and the same Philosophy, just changed the body'.

Sawan Singh Gogia

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO LOVE THE CREATOR

December 3, 2016

by Harbans Lal, PhD., D.Lit. (hons)

Source: seekingwisdomblog.wordpress.com



I admire Pope Francis for undertaking a worldwide year of events to promote the acceptance of diversity within Christianity, which has come to accept a wide range of Protestant and Catholic beliefs. The inaugural event was a recent ecumenical service led by the Pope in Sweden. It was a run up to the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's challenge, which resulted in the greatest schism in western Christianity and led to a string of religious wars.



The Catholic Pope Francis welcomes the protestant woman Archbishop Antje Jackelén of Uppsala, head of the Lutheran Church of Sweden.

Sometime after the demise of the Prophet, the Catholic Church began to drift into hollow rituals and exploitation of the innocent under the guidance of self-appointed heirs. That exploitation gave birth to a courageous reformer, Martin Luther, a Professor of Theology who later became a priest in order to undertake church's reformation. On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther walked to a church in the German town of Wittenberg and nailed a document – his 95 theses – to its wooden doors. That lightened the fuse of the Reformation and the birth of many Christian denominations. Then Luther burned the Papal Bull that excommunicated him.

Christian leaders and congregations will spend the next 12 months promoting activities to accept the diversity that crept into their practices and recognize the centuries of division. Francis will lead prayers asking “forgiveness for divisions perpetuated by Christians from the two traditions”.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Diversity is a law of nature that is decisively essential not only for survival of the species but also for growth and propagation of creation; the greater the diversity of life, the greater the chance for survival. Adaptive responses to new challenges such as climate change, advancement of science, resistance against illness, and medical discoveries or economic developments are essential to not only survival but to new growth.

What is now apparent from the history of the human race is that the law of diversity equally applies to the survival and progression of cultures, ideologies and faiths. The history of Christianity as briefly described above is a powerful witness.

The Christian tale is similar to Islam where Sunni and Shia factions are daily witness to their own destruction in the absence of accepting diversity. The Sikhs too cannot escape the blame. There too evolved diversity such as Sehajdhari Sikhs, Khande-di-Pahuldhari Sikhs, Namdhari Sikhs, Nirankari Sikhs, Nanak Panthi Sikhs, Nirmala Sikhs, Dalit Sikhs, and so on. The secret of advancement in religions as Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism lies in their acceptance of diversity.

What is pertinent to this discussion is that, in spite of several daring examples, many religious fundamentalists or fanatics continue to worship the zeal of uniformity and they continue to attempt punishing diversity among their own faith communities. Regrettably, many Sikh sangats and their governing institutions are no exception. In some places there are reports their even becoming militant to impose uniformity.

A MESSAGE OF DIVERSITY



Guru Nanak anticipated the new historical age as comprising a worldwide community of ever increasingly close-knit global villages. Here cultures and religions, which were once isolated

from one another, would live as close neighbors. At the same time, new ideas and insights from science and technology will season the interaction between and among faiths, and between the faith and culture of the faith people. He, with nine successors, prepared the worlds' communities to benefit from what was coming.all-religions-infographic

Guru Nanak's own lifestyle, his extensive travels, his famous interfaith dialogues; they all attest to the fact that Guru Nanak was a promoter of interfaith dialogue that drove appreciation of diversity. He visited major religious centers located far and wide to promote interfaith dialogues. He wore a wide variety of religious robes popular in respective faiths and cultures. He acquired over a dozen different honorific titles by faith communities. They included **Baba, Lama, Pir, Guru, Faqir**, etc.

THE COMPILATION OF THE GURU GRANTH

Guru Arjan followed Guru Nanak's footsteps and compiled the first world scripture, the Guru Granth, where he invited multiple co-authors selected from widely diverse backgrounds. He made use of a language which allowed for diversity, and which enjoyed wide currency in the whole of Southeast Asia as well as in the Mid-East. He employed metaphors from all cultures to encourage continual interpretation for emerging civil societies.

From the Guru Granth, we learn that each faith is inspired by a unique vision of the Divine and many faiths had developed into distinct ethnic identities within and without. Each perceives the Divine as the source of unity in diversity of creation and evolving cultures.

Guru Granth's compilation created a philosophical system based on "unity in diversity" that celebrates the unique merits of each particular approach to the divine reality, yet it also provides a way to weld each into a cohesive common

agenda. The aim was to benefit diverse civil societies.



Muslim Imam of Mogul Emperor Jahangir, Mian Mir, laying the Foundation Stone of the famous Sikh Shrine, Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple)

The multiple co-authors of the Guru Granth promote appreciation of diversity and enunciate the spiritual philosophy of Ek Onkaar, the One Reality manifested in all Creation, where each individual longs for divine attributes within each person and within each creature with a sense of gratitude. The Guru Granth gives the highest allegiance to the power and grace of Truth and its creative energy that operates through every one and through all ages. Nanak's pronouncement of the Truth as the highest religion is a powerful statement.

ਏਕੇ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ ॥ SGGS, p. 1188

In reality there is only one faith/religion (Dharma), that is, to assertively enshrine the Eternal Truth

Under the Sikh traditions, congregations of diverse compositions are welcome. A typical Sikh congregation exhibiting diversity is seen in

prayers and singing conducted by variety of seeker (shown in the title photo) and sharing of a meal at the close of the congregational proceedings shown below. Diversity in the attendance of Sikh Congregations is inherent and is continually encouraged.

RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE

The Guru Granth challenges the religious people of the world to realize spirituality in their own faiths and work constructively with members of other traditions towards realization of the Truth. We learn that a vision of the healing light of spirituality overcomes the social and ideological issues that underlie much of the conflict between religions and the exploitation by illusionary materialism.



Guru Nanak with Bala (Hindu) and Mardana (Muslim),
lifelong travelling companions.

Let us welcome diversity within and without our society. Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed his life and his family to fight against the uniformity of the religion that the Mughals wanted to bring about. Bhai Santokh Singh, the eminent historian, summarized Guru Gobind Singh's accomplishment in preserving Diversity in opposition to uniformity in these powerful words (*translation of the original text by the author*).

Were Guru Gobind Singh not there at the critical juncture of Indian history (Mogul era), there

would have been all uniformity; the diversity in religious circles, diverse scriptures and diverse modes of worship would have taken wings. In favor of one religion, the others would have been destroyed and their sacred places smashed. Sin would have replaced the virtues.

In the memory of unparalleled sacrifices of Guru Gobind Singh, let us strive for respecting diversity in our faith practices by communities throughout the world. The Universal Scripture of the Guru Granth glorified the diversity by stating that it was the wish of our creator.

ਮੇਰੈ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਇਕੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥

ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੇਹਾ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ SGGs, p. 1056

Divine Creator has performed a sacred spectacle that He has created no one like anyone else.

Let us not be bitter, discriminatory or violent against those who differ from us in one thing or the other. They should not be perceived as adversaries or as competitors, but instead be acknowledged for what they are: brothers and sisters in faith. All wisdom seekers (Sikhs) must seek and promote unity in congregations, organizations, groups, institutions, and in our diaspora societies throughout the world. Obviously, from unity I never mean uniformity.

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SIKHISM: ACADEMIC FORUM Guru Nanak's Mind & Historical Research

Part 1 of 3

Sulakhan S. Dhillon, Berkeley, CA

[From Sikh Bulletin April 2003]

Guru Nanak (1469-1539), who has passed through history, left a theological legacy that, in the last

five hundred years, has become the Sikh religious tradition for over twenty million people spread out worldwide. The events of the early and late 17th century, that introduced militarism into the tradition, along with its expanding appeal among the rural masses, giving them solid theological base, determined the basic structure of the Sikh society. This growth gave them the cohesive strength to withstand the political onslaughts forced on them by the Mogul rulers of Northern India. These factors in the tradition neither changed nor altered the “theological form” of Guru Nanak’s vision but preserved and protected the tradition. For the last five centuries, the Sikh tradition has pushed forward and claimed its own rightful place, both as a world religion and as a distinct culture. Now, the questions, such as who are the Sikhs and what is their belief system, are not alien to the aware mind. Also, it has found legitimacy and rapid growth in the academic world.

In recent times, the skillful historical work of Hew McLeod, a native of New Zealand, exploring the genesis of Sikhism through the historical identity of Guru Nanak, has brought a new era in Sikh studies while raising serious eyebrows of the interested scholars of Sikhism, while at the same time, it has generated a storm of reactions among the believers of Sikhism that had the effect of waking Sikhs from their “dogmatic slumber”¹. Both negative and positive reactions, have been phenomenal in this case, but in this atmosphere, unfortunately, the debate got muddled up which ought to have produced fruitful scholarship in Sikh studies. Nonetheless, it has brought it forward and established norms thereby placing the Sikh studies in par with the scholarly study of other religious thought of the world. This indeed, is a good development and an enormous contribution of McLeod.

1. The issues

In the following discussion, in the philosophical framework, we would address and critique some of the segments of the issues involved in the

historical research in general and of McLeod’s work on Guru Nanak’s historical identity in particular. Since Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh religious tradition, all the eyes are upon him to know him as accurately as possible. Therefore, in this respect, it is important to know his mind than his historical existence. As we look critically, we find that some of the historical images of Guru Nanak overshadow the knowledge of his mind, so we must critique history’s conclusions in this respect. This will incorporate, the discussion of the extent of historical knowledge, the impact of the analytical thinking on the nature of knowledge, the role of facts, the meaning of the premises and of the inferences supplying historical conclusions to us. Also, we will distinguish briefly, the objective and subjective methodologies of obtaining knowledge. Since Guru Nanak’s vision is subjective in nature, it is imperative that this issue is clarified so that we comprehend the nature of his mind as accurately as possible.

The major claim of Guru Nanak’s belief system, which we perceive evolving from his writings, the “**Bani**”, is the theory of **Ethical Realism**. We have to go through the critique of relevant issues to clearly establish that. The critical treatment of some of the related segments is an attempt to clear the perceptual path to achieve comprehension of his mind. Though we can be pulled to more epistemological details and create more confusion, but the restraint shall be exercised to keep the discussion brief and clear and to the point. However, this may bring some repetitive treatment of some of the terms and ideas, necessary for the contextual coherence, which would be kept to the minimum.

As we look at the genesis of the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak’s personal vision holds the central position of a prime mover, both historically and theologically. *Immediately, one wonders whether his vision is direct revelation or the result of the historical derivation from the other religious tradition, which, of course, has to be argued out. We perceive that it is a direct revelation on*

which historical research imposes its methodology and confuses the nature of his direct vision. Also, many other accounts of Guru Nanak complicate the problem in presenting us with various ambiguous images that are mythological, legendary and artistic about his time and life. They tell only the external story of Guru Nanak's humane existence, but to find out the internal reality of his mind, beyond these images, we have to look into his writings, the "*Bani*", where we can find the systematic "theological form". This form, we perceive to be the originality of his mind and shall argue philosophically, that it is consistent and systematic and can easily be perceived as the theory of Ethical Realism as stated before. In order to establish that successfully, we have to critique the historical images that appear to be overlapping this reality. Therefore, the legitimate critique of history, in this regard becomes challenging and necessary.

2. History & historicity

History in its wider perspective, compared to the specific or scientific knowledge of an event or a person, encompasses a vast reservoir of information of the forces, events, ideas and movements that can unfold their own historical knowledge. Also, it can provide us with the useful and formal understanding of the nature of the world past and present in which these forces are operative and create the phenomenological reality of their own.

Theoretically, the concept of world history has been formulated by philosophers like Hegel (early 19th century) as a phenomenon that has its own inherent patterns and evolution in time determined by the forces of logic beyond the control of man. Other thinkers such as Carl Marx (late 19th century) give deterministic idea of history shaped by the economic and political forces. This idea of world history is dynamic in which man works positively in shaping the nature of the global society. In the 20th century, in this process, we also observe man, time and changes intertwined working as the powerful dynamics in shaping the

nature of our modern world. Also, in the modern period, Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) sees history as the study of human phenomena as they move through time and space. He perceives man and nature as the dominant agents of change. Of course, these are the theoretical views of the philosophy of history. But to discover an event or the knowledge of a person such as the theological identity of Guru Nanak's mind, we have to take departure from these theoretical views.

As our focus changes, we employ more controlled method of discovering specific events in specific time and place to construct a specific story. This emphasis is more scientific in nature and in this inquiry we find that some facts, ideas and events are considered knowable while others may or may not be known. We become more precise in the method of knowing as to how the known is known.

Historian's memory recalls events that may give useful knowledge but the memory and its contents in themselves can be doubted for their truth or falsity because we are pulling the past to the present vantage point to determine its true nature. Also, in this process we immediately experience a vast gulf of time between us and the past for which we do not have any knowledge what it contains. We are left to the possibility of interpretation of what we find. How then, do we account for the accurate knowledge of the past events? An accurate knowledge in this respect may turn out to be a mere hypothesis. As we critique available logical conclusions that may or may not be logical in the strict sense of the logic, we remain unsatisfied. Under such circumstances, the discovery of Guru Nanak's mind and his true identity, established five hundred years ago, poses a serious epistemological problem as to how do we accurately know him beyond historical accounts?

We are limited to some of the evidences and their examination to construct this knowledge. This means that all the events, evidences as well as

their inferences and conclusions come under strict scrutiny. Also, it implies that all possible interpretations of the findings are open to new interpretations equally valid and sound, which makes this process a continuum. Also, the methods and tools for discovering new knowledge that in themselves, are open to fresh critique. This stirring process appears to be the nature and pattern of obtaining critical knowledge. How else could it be?

3. Guru Nanak's identity - historical & theological.

The true identity of Guru Nanak and his mind has to be constructed from what he said as well as from the various accounts and interpretations bearing on it. In the present literature, Guru Nanak is presented to us in several identities such as historical identity, theological identity, social identity, philosophical identity and sant-faqir identity as well as several artistic images. This throws us in utter confusion that requires the examination of the impact of all these areas to establish the accurate perception of his mind.

The analytical and philosophical tools that are available and generally applied in analytic, come to interplay. This pushes the inquiry to the philosophical details. As Prof. P. McKeon said, "Any problem pushed far enough is philosophical".² Therefore, the role of critical philosophizing, in this respect becomes necessary and throws this discussion strictly, in the lap of analytical philosophy and possibly creates some stress for those who do not have any taste for philosophy, let alone analytic, for which we can only extend our sympathies.

Guru Nanak's imagination transcends the phenomenological reality of the world and reaches the heights of Western literary giants like Plato's (late 5th century B.C.) Idea of the Good, Spinoza's (mid-17th century) concept of the Substance as well as of Kant's (mid-18th century) notion of Neumenon (things -in-themselves) and others. Though these comparisons are unusual but seem to

be legitimate in the light of the spirit of free inquiry and dialectics. The intellectuals and the academicians are fond of analyses and dialectics where the issues are clearly defined and understood. Wittgenstein says, "The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts... A philosophical work consists entirely of elucidation. The result of philosophy is not a number of propositions, but to make our propositions clear."³ Therefore, philosophy should not be a heavy burden on man's mind but the relief of it. It is a matter of wonder why people seem to disbelieve this.

Knowing the theological identity of Guru Nanak or his mind, the meaning of his message in the environment of the time, are the most crucial problems. We need to look, analytically, beyond the historical perceptions because we find that historical knowledge is only his partial identity hence is not the reality of his mind. Therefore, we must go beyond the historical perceptions that can overlap his theological identity, his mind that we perceive to be different from what his historical identity provides us.

In reality Guru Nanak that is believed and revered by his followers, is an undifferentiated figure, historical and theological rolled in one, that makes the most important contribution to the spiritual heritage of mankind in general sense and lays the foundation of Sikh religious tradition in particular. Both history and theology can claim him but these claims have two different meanings. Both history and theology, with their well-established methodologies, make tremendous contributions to our knowledge but their proximity to each other causes some confusion. These two notions of Guru Nanak lead us to two different directions.

The historical story of Guru Nanak is different from his theological mind; hence the message is different from the messenger. Without carefully distinguishing the story from his teachings it will be difficult to perceive the nature of his mind. The story is external or "about" Guru Nanak and not

internal “of” Guru Nanak’s mind. We mean by “of”, Guru Nanak’s inward experience of his mind, which he told us in his writings. The historical understanding of Guru Nanak therefore, remains a mere report, in the social and public context, of a person who lived in a certain time among other people. No doubt this is important but if this is perceived to be the true identity of Guru Nanak then we miss knowing the internal reality of his message. Therefore, we must critique the historical research that appears to be overshadowing his mental identity. This discussion, therefore, necessarily becomes the critique of history and its methodology but does not minimize the role of history as an important discipline in itself.

History serves us well in linking our past to the present producing a logical perception of our existence without which we would lose the sense of it all. Probably, history is nothing more than an awareness of time. How else would we know time and its movement? Without history we would be left in utter wonder not knowing what we are doing, where we have been or where we are going. Though history does help us to produce meaningful reference of our existence in time, but we must also be aware of its meaning and the extent of its knowledge. Therefore, we have to treat historical knowledge as one kind of knowledge among many other kinds.

Its proximity to theology in this case causes a legitimate concern that needs to be analyzed. Time and existence of the individuals mix events, perceptions, language and meaning all in one undifferentiated whole which is nothing more than a bundle of ambiguities.

How, then, do we distinguish each element in that? This caution in learning implies the use of analytic and epistemology, with the aid of which, we discover how we can know Guru Nanak and validate this knowing. What we really mean is that “knowing Guru Nanak” is knowing his mind, the “theological form” of his belief system. This is

only possible by interpreting his writings correctly that is largely available to us in the Adi Granth under Mohala 1. It is categorically impossible to know Guru Nanak as he knew himself because we are not he. Leaving this puzzle aside, an attempt should be made to understand what he said as accurately as possible. Therefore, we center on Guru Nanak’s mind to know that and not on the physical existence of an individual, which is the job of history to establish.

To clarify this further we need to be constantly on guard to distinguish his “historical form” from his “theological form” without which the cloud of misperception will keep hovering over it. It appears then, that we are dealing with two images of Guru Nanak who in actuality was one person. Since he is perceived in two forms, both of them can be understood legitimately in their own categories provided these categories are clearly differentiated from each other

4. The extent of history

It is the contention of the author that history only gives knowledge of Guru Nanak as an event in a specific historical context like many other events, a person among many persons which does not unfold the reality of his mind, the “theological form” which we perceive to go beyond the relativity of historical time and phases into the universality of time. History is the story of relative time while theological claims, by virtue of its transcendental nature, relate to the eternal notion of time. Time is a continuous stream whose beginning and end, both rationally and empirically, is not possible to determine. History gives us a peek into time that stretches towards past and future but theology seems to expand and enlarges this peek towards the awareness of universality and defuses our perception into mysticism. The worlds of intellect and of the spirit appear to be two worlds and we begin to realize that the poets and the scholars belong to two different species of mankind and the distinction between the academy and the monastery gets clarified. Guru Nanak, in this context, seems to

belong to the poets.

Historical conclusions are restricted to the premises from which they are drawn. If the premises are faulty in themselves in some form then the conclusion would also be faulty. It compounds the matter further whether the conclusion is arrived at validly or not for which we have to turn to the critique of the process of logical reasoning to determine if the correct application of the rules of logic is followed. Many historical conclusions may easily fail this test. The rules of logic are nobody's friend except of those who correctly and skillfully use them. Logical tools do not tell a story but in their application, examine the story how it is put together.

In the ordinary empirical sense, we cannot know Guru Nanak and his mind now since he is an event of the past, which defies verification. We can only have an imaginative account about him, which does not go beyond fiction, mythology and imaginative stories whose truth is hard to establish. **Our goal is to establish the knowledge of his mind, as accurately as possible, which is only obtainable by correct interpretation of what he said.** It is possible that our interpretations may also be faulty for which we may have to pay attention to the more comprehensive interpretation of someone else. Since his vision is believed to be the fountainhead of the Sikh religious tradition and its religious value system permeates through the functioning of the Sikh society, it is extremely important that we clearly perceive its reality without which the Sikh culture cannot be known accurately. The life of the Sikhs is their traditional belief system. How else would you understand a people?

As we attempt to know the theological identity of Guru Nanak, a major argument springs up. Since he lived, moved and talked with people in the distant past, how can we perceive him beyond historical context and reach his mind now? History only gives us external knowledge of his physical being, the "historical form" but not the internal

knowledge of his mind, the "theological form". Therefore, we have to assess the right role of history and the meaning of its knowledge. This issue, therefore, will remain in the center of our discussion and would not disappear unless we are able to know it clearly.

5. Guru Nanak's basic belief

The first glimpse of Guru Nanak's mind leads us to his unwavering faith in **"ONE GOD"** clearly stated in the beginning of Japji in *Mul Mantra* in the beginning of the *Adi Granth*. Various textual scholars differ in their views as to the correct interpretation of the *Mul Mantra*,⁴ which makes difficult to determine the accurate explanation. Some scholars link this belief with Vedic *"OM"* in the effort to show that Sikhism is rooted in Hinduism, another controversial issue. Some even argue independently that *"EK OMKAR"* is not original with Guru Nanak. We deliberately avoid this tar pit of complex textual arguments conjoined with multiple weak arguments without definitive conclusion. Therefore, we interpret *"EK OMKAR"* as a stipulated definition of God by Guru Nanak with which scholars in general, show an agreement. He abundantly qualifies this belief in the Japji, which is his revelation whose legitimacy can be argued successfully on philosophic ground supported by the theory of innate ideas of both Plato and Descartes in the rationalist tradition in the western philosophy. If we turn to that direction to establish that, it would enlarge the discussion, involving more rational argumentation and would push us away from our indented focus. Also, we argue and classify that this position evolves into his theory of **"Qualified Monotheism"** which he himself abundantly qualifies and affirms with many attributes. He states that there is **One God, Creator of this world, without enmity with any one, fearless, timeless, and never born, always is and will be true.**⁵

He emphasizes his Monotheistic belief frequently throughout his "Bani" including an emphatic statement by saying. *"Sahib mera eko hai, Eko hai bhai eko hai"*⁶. How explicit and clear can one

be in declaring one's belief? This belief, we perceive to be the originality of Guru Nanak's mind and a visionary ground of systematic Ethical Realism in Sikhism. This is not a historical deduction of a rational mind or reworking of Sant synthesis as stated by McLeod. It is the dynamic experience of the spirit, the spiritual mind. This is the subjective category of Guru Nanak's experience of the transcendental reality to which Soren Kierkegaard, Christian theologian and father of existential thought, classifies as subjective truth. **This is the Guru Nanak's contribution to the world of religious thought.**

One may doubt the truth of someone's subjective experience, which is hard to prove objectively. Objective and public proofs are scientific and demonstrable but subjective experiences are true to the believer only. The curiosity of objective proof is a lure of the scientific mind that insists on proof otherwise turns easily skeptic. This is not the case with the believer who does not need any proof. He knows his own experience, in the sense William James advances his views in his theory of Radical Empiricism.

Epistemologically, it is hard to reconcile the methods of objectivity and of subjectivity, which would be mixing of the two categories of knowing. It is necessary to know how we know but it is impossible to know how others can know the same. How can subjective knowing is known objectively, is a wrong question. There are several kinds of knowing and they can be treated in their own categories of thought. We ask a complex question here that how can there be one kind of knowing? The answer to that would lead us to the knowledge of various fields of knowledge.

6. The term "*Sahj*" as an historical inference

Historians have to look for the antecedents so that they can safely link to the intended consequences to make a historical statement. If they cannot find them they feel lost hence cannot write history. Pursuing this pattern of historical arguments, if we accept the inference that Guru Nanak draws his

theological links from the Nath tradition as has been advanced by Hew McLeod, then we have Guru Nanak whose theology is derivative hence not original in other words it is rational and not a revelation. How could we allow historical inference of this kind change the foundation of revelatory theology? Such a historical inference can devastate revelation and grossly misinterprets the foundation of Sikhism. Therefore, it becomes crucial that such inferences are analyzed in terms of its logical use and the theological meaning. If we do not do that then history can easily fool us all in knowing the origin of Sikhism. If it shows that this inference is faulty both in its logical use and in its contextual and categorical meaning then obviously McLeod's conclusion can be nullified. Also, we may find that history or historical inferences only work best within the bounds of the evidences that are similar both in kind and in meaning provided they are used correctly in their logical application. This is a hard test for history to pass.

Also for example, McLeod looks for the origin of Guru Nanak's thought in Sant-Nath framework and says, "It is not without significance that the commonest of all terms used by both Kabir and Guru Nanak to express this experience of union is *Sahaj*, a word which at once carries us back into Nath theory and beyond the Nath tradition into the earlier world of tantric Buddhism. The bhakti influence retains its primacy, but the Nath content of Kabir's thought is also of fundamental importance."⁷ In this milieu, finding the theological term "*Sahj*" as a link of Guru Nanak and Kabir to tantric tradition throws Guru Nanak's theological perceptions into the traditional Hindu fold. Also, it brings Kabir, a bhakat of high profile, in close proximity, in fact in the middle of it, not to be ignored. Certainly, an argument can be developed by implication of his statement that McLeod connects Kabir to Guru Nanak by the use of the term "*Sahj*". This kind of complex conclusion clearly overshadows Guru Nanak's originality that requires scrutiny.

As stated previously, historians must find an antecedent for their consequent, otherwise they cannot draw conclusion hence history cannot tell the story without which it may have to close the shop. **If we listen to history and admit, as McLeod argues that the origin of Guru Nanak's thought is a synthesis worked from the Sant-Nath tradition, then it turns the Sikh tradition upside down.** This conclusion has become a serious issue that has caused disturbance, especially in some Sikh scholarly circles. Also, this brings the integrity of the Sikh religious tradition to a serious challenge, against which the Sikhs have raised their voice vigorously against McLeod. Though a legitimate debate, it lacked the scholarly sophistication to defend the originality of Sikhism. This made name McLeod a household word. In order to see more advancement in Sikh studies, more comprehensive critiques, in this respect are needed.

Pursuing our major concerns in this inquiry, we must examine the nature and the content as well as the meaning of the terms, which are in the heart of this controversy. We find that the term "*Sahj*" is loosely used by McLeod. "*Sahj*" is a state in the religious experience of the believer, a psychological event in his mind and not a historical and social event, which is objectively verifiable, hence is not evidence. The meaning, connotation and the context of this term leads more towards ontology than to an historical event; therefore, this cannot be used as an evidence to support any historical conclusion.

Also, it is hard to perceive the state of "*Sahj*" affecting another individual exactly in the same way as the original believer or user. How can we enter another person's mind to verify this? Therefore, the use of this unverifiable evidence fails to work as an historical inference. The use of such terms is nothing more than a metaphysical fantasy that can easily excites a historian assuming the similarity of meaning, and leaping over to the conclusion. Such a deduction creates a vast ground

for lovely conjectures but eludes the logical construction of true knowledge.

Therefore, we remain in the dark not knowing that the meanings of "*Sahj*" used both by Kabir and Guru Nanak are the same? Can subjective experiences of two people have the same context and meaning in both senses? How do we know and establish that? If Kabir and Guru Nanak lived close to each other in time does that mean that they had the similar experiences? How can we draw an historical inference from the proximity of time between the two men? Is there any valid and verifiable proof besides a convenient conjecture that the term "*Sahj*" is a link between Kabir and Guru Nanak? Mere conjectures do not make good history let alone rendering the true knowledge.

Guru Nanak uses lots of terms that are part and parcel of Hinduism, Islam and Sufism and frequently occurs in his "*Bani*". Does Guru Nanak's use of those terms mean that his thought is linked to all those religious traditions? The use of language is only a vehicle to convey what is in the mind. It is not an essence of the mental reality, which exists prior to uttering a word. Historically, Guru Nanak contended vigorously in challenging the foundation of several religious practices of others and has used the language commonly understood but that does not mean that his theological reality was the same as of those with whom he contended. Similarly many words with Persian and Arabic meanings can lead one to link Islamic influence on Guru Nanak. Why that is not done as it is done in case of Hinduism? In fact, many scholars, majority of them western in this respect, have been discovered doing that which indicates the dire need of the revisions of several encyclopedias dealing with Sikhism.

The use of language, though a complex area in terms of meaning and usage, need thorough investigation prior to any conclusion drawn on the basis of only the usages of terms. Therefore, using similar words in a language cannot be construed as

holding the similarities in the contextual meaning. Beyond language, what is in one mind necessarily does not mean that the same thing is in other mind. If that could be the case then how do we know and verify that similarity? One experience is a singular event of one mind. Its location and the content as well as the meaning belong to it. This is the subjective reality of one's mind. Thus the originality of the mind cannot be duplicated, let alone using that as an inference to draw historical conclusion. Therefore, we have to look beyond the faulty historical inferences and conclusions, which tempt us to fall in error.

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Notes and References

1. This reference is Immanuel Kant's admittance that David Hume, British Empiricist, "woke him from his slumber" and made him aware that the origin of knowledge is in the sense experience. Kant previously held that it was in the rational faculties of the mind. He builds an elaborate system of knowledge by starting from the sense data (experience) and arranging it in the categories of rational (reason) understanding of the mind.
2. McKeon P. On Understanding of Natural Sciences. Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994, P. X1
3. Wittgenstein Ludwig, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Rutledge Press, KY, 1995 P. 4.13.
4. See an excellent discussion on this subject in Pritam Singh's article, The interpretation of Mul Mantra, in his book, The Sikh Concept of the Divine, Guru Nanak Dev Univ. Press, Amritsar, 1985
5. Adi Granth, P.1
6. Abid. Rag Asa, P. 350
7. McLeod Hew., Sikhs and Sikhism, Oxford Univ. Press, New Delhi. 1999. P.149-153

SIKHISM: ACADEMIC FORUM Guru Nanak's Mind & Historical Research

Part 2 of 3

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Launching our inquiry relative to the historical and theological realities about Guru Nanak, we need to assess and critique their structure and methods to see how they provide knowledge to us. Since historical knowledge is constructed rationally, we can easily examine its construction. **Theological knowledge, on the other hand, is not a rational construct but is expressed in the form of poetic utterances about the transcendental reality, which can neither be rationally argued nor empirically verified.** However, in the field of philosophy this issue has been thoroughly argued out both by the rationalists and the empiricists in the history of Western philosophy. David Hume (1711-1776) British empiricist held that rational theology is impossible. Hence objective knowledge of theology is irrelevant. In spite of that the attempts have been made by the scholastic philosophers, particularly by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who, using the Aristotelian model and constructing arguments in the rationalist and naturalist framework, proves the existence of God. Both empiricists and rationalists have battled over this issue establishing different methodologies from each other. Since the whole enterprise comes under the area of objective reasoning, it can be easily critiqued. Therefore, any rational construct of the historian's knowledge of Guru Nanak and his theology coming under the realm of objectivity can also be critiqued.

7. Historian & the critic

Both the historian and the critic, by virtue of their specific task, measuring and dealing with the given set of evidences, remain in the same framework, adhering to the rules of rational inquiry. Both seek for the truth that explicitly supports the intended conclusion of the story. The historian skillfully constructs the story, while the critic examines the skill of the craft. This puts the

historian under a heavy burden because crafting the historical story is more complex than its examination. The contents, the goals and even the intentions of the historian come to be examined. Without precise control new ground for fresh critique will spring up and will take the inquiry to a different direction ad infinitum. Therefore, the rules of relevancy and accountability must govern both the critic and the historian. As stated before, this becomes a complex enterprise of logical reasoning, the use and meaning of the language, as well as the intent and the direction of the historian all in one. This process, therefore, led by the force of logic and the strict reasoning, leaves nothing unexamined and spares no one. It also implies that the well-honed research tools of the investigator as well as of the critic can push the inquiry to the theoretical direction, making this an exclusive game of the analytical philosophers. But it should not push others, who are very keen to pursue truth and the clarity of ideas from the subject matter. After all, the pursuit of knowledge is neither anyone's monopoly nor should it be perceived as the heartless game of cold and callous activity of the few. Though knowledge can be pursued for knowledge's sake but in the ultimate sense it should relate to man where it dwells and proves its worth. Metaphysical status of knowledge without man perceiving it is neither real nor meaningful.

8. Medieval religious reality

Considering the rich religious environments of the medieval period, it is logical to seek some historical links to Guru Nanak's thought from the traditions of its predecessors. This opens the door to the vast reservoir of classical Hinduism as well as Islam, which are assumed by many scholars, to be the source of Sikhism as well as most of the major and minor religions of Northern India. One may develop even in Buddhism and Jainism, some logical links, to Classical Hinduism, whether valid or not. Therefore, seeking the roots of Sikhism in this reservoir is attractive and plausible. Most Western oriental scholars have centered their inquiries on classical Hinduism, and now their assumptions are gradually coming under scrutiny.

Since in this inquiry, our attempt is to show that the origin of Guru Nanak's theology is not historical, we must examine the lure and method of history as it applies in this case.

During 15th century, the Bhakti movement reached its zenith and offers much richness of religious reality. Many thoughts converged and revitalized the religious conscience of the people of Northern India. Khushwant Singh says, "People who knew little or nothing of each other felt the pull of the *Zeitgeist* and were saying the same sort of thing in their own languages in distant parts of India. There was Chaitanya in Bengal; Ramananda and Kabir in Uttar Pradesh; Mira Bai in Rajasthan; Tukaram, Nam Dev, Trilochan, and Paramanand in Maharashtra; Vallabha Swami in Telegana; Sadhana in Sind. By the end of the 15th century, the influence of the Bhakta orders was far greater than that of orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism."⁸. This is the period of Guru Nanak whose thought along with others, also added to Northern India's complex religious reality whose historical impact on people is evident to this day. The respect of all the *Bhaktas* is almost universal. Also, the inclusion of some of the Bhagats' writings in the *Adi Granth* shows great acceptance of their thought transcending their caste and station in life. It is an evidence of Great Spirit of humanism and theological liberality that brought its incorporation in the Sikh tradition. The Sikh religious consciousness is well developed in recognizing and practicing this value of universalism. The complexity of this period, from the historical point of view, compounds the problem because many thoughts and languages cross-fertilized themselves. The love and expression for the transcendence in the form of Bhajans of various Saint-poets became very popular. One can easily imagine that such a rich atmosphere of the medieval period could influence Guru Nanak's thought since he frequently traveled around Northern India and was fond of dialogues (ghost) with other saints of different faiths than his own. This mode did popularize his thought.

The inclusion of the *Bhakat Bani*, in the *Adi Granth*, besides its liberal theological posture, infused the spirit of equality and humanism in the Sikh culture, which has always been the vital factor of this culture. Also, this naturally enlarged the social obligations of the Sikh Gurus to incorporate and protect the weak in times of oppressions by the strong as has been the case in the struggle under the Mughal rulers.

In such an important period we cannot lose sight of our concerns to look critically for any possible theological influence on Guru Nanak, the critical question that always assumes the driving force in our inquiry. As we perceive it, Guru Nanak's theology, emerges with its own "*elan-vital*" that shows its independence, contrary to any historical influence on it. This becomes clear as we look at its growth. Without this "*vital reality within*", the Sikh tradition would have either disappeared or could have become a minor cult on the periphery of Hinduism or Islam. In both cases this did not happen, so how do we account for this development? Besides, the force of Guru Nanak's faith, challenging Hindu and Muslim practices, shows logic of its own that establishes a vital and independent personal category of human faith in God, which consequently becomes the ground of Sikh ethics. Man, in this position recognizes God's will (*Hukam*) and attunes his own will to it thereby experiences the ontological reality prevailing all around him of which he perceives himself as part. This category of the "*individual in faith*" was the hallmark of the medieval religious reality. This experience of independent religious reality Guru Nanak expounded and demonstrated in his debates with the *Sidhs* in the 73 verses of the *Sidh-Gosht Bani* in the *Adi Granth*. **He advances a theory of transformation of one's psyche instead of theory of renunciation advocated by classical Hinduism. The individual, instead of wandering in the forests by leaving home and society as Ascetic, *Yogi* or *Sunyasi*, settles down in the society as a responsible householder.** The *Bhakti* movement emphasized that the individual salvation lay in the

individual's transformation of oneself and finding God within. The thrust of Kabir's message also, in this regard, is well recognized and accepted and shows another element of popular medieval religious reality.

The true renunciation, as Guru Nanak held, is to discover the God's will in one's own psyche and discard self-will. Individual becomes the center of his own salvation. It turns the theory of renunciation around and brings the individual home from the forests and shows that the struggle to achieve salvation lies within the individual's psyche. This thought is clarified in the answer Guru Nanak gives to the question posed by Charpat yogi who, metaphorically asks, how can an individual cross over the troubled waters of the world and reach the other shore. Guru Nanak answers the question using the analogy of a duck and the lotus flower, and says,

"*Jaissey jal mein kmal niralam, murgai nisaneh
Surt sabd bhav sagr tariye, Nanak nam vikhaney.*"⁸

Eng. Translation: **"As a lotus flower grows in the water and a duck swims in it both are unaffected by it, thus, the individual can cross over the troubled ocean of life, with mind attuned to God's name."**

This is an example of an independent theological position held by Guru Nanak. Several other incidents can be cited of a similar nature where we can see the essence of his thought. His encounter with the Sufis of Pakpattan was significant in this respect. Kamal, *murid* (disciple) of Pir Ibrahim, gathering wood in the jungle nearby, heard Guru Nanak and Mardana singing the following hymn.

"*Apey patti, kalm aup, apey leikh bhee tun
EKO kahaye Nanka dooja kahein ko.*"⁹

Eng. Trans. "You are the pen, the writing and the pad,

Nanak says there is only one and no other?

Kamal dropped the firewood and memorized the hymn and ran to his Murshid Ibrahim to report seeing a Fakir. They brought Guru Nanak to their

Dehra (khangah) where Sheikh Ibrahim read *Dohas (verses)* of Shakarganj to him, which Guru Nanak liked. **Sheikh marveled at Guru Nanak's firm belief in ONENESS of God in contrast to dualism in Islam of Allah and his prophet Mohammad.**¹⁰ This account of their discourse (*gosht*) shows that Guru Nanak, in his travel, often encountered various seekers of the medieval period in many places and availed the opportunities of free exchanges with them. This speaks highly of the open atmosphere of the time. Also, it brings out the clear theological distinctions between Guru Nanak and other religious traditions. Such distinctions do not necessarily show any verifiable historical links to his theology but they add enrichment to the spirit of the period.

9. Sant Synthesis

Another conceptual ground advanced by McLeod, who firmly states, "It is at once evident that his thought is clearly related to that of Sant tradition of Northern India and there can be no doubt that much of it was derived directly from this tradition. This is not, however, a sufficient answer to the question of the antecedents... The system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern..."¹¹ Though McLeod expresses some doubts about the historical antecedents of Guru Nanak's thought but at the same time, claims that much of it was derived directly from the Sant tradition. How do we understand this ambivalence? As an historian, he cannot shed the belief of the possibility of linking him to someone or to some tradition. So he assumes a connection with the so-called Sant tradition which is nothing more than a metaphysical notion derived from the plurality of the medieval Sants who all sought union with God in their own ideological frameworks. If Guru Nanak's life is perceived in this context, it is easy to assume some historical links to his thought. Though such an assumption carries an historical ring but critically, this thought must have valid and verifiable conclusions before we can give any credence to it.

We raise a critical question and precisely ask what is the Sant synthesis and what are its contents that Guru Nanak borrows? Sant tradition appears to be a panorama of styles and modes of the wandering seekers of God. This tradition can easily incorporate any and all seekers of the transcendence and leaves the impression that it has a definite theological system but in actuality it is a bundle of theological generalities conceptualized metaphysical. That can easily be linked to any important seeker of the medieval period. We need to engage in critical theology to specifically establish anything substantive in this regard. For instance, the theological differences between Kabir, Guru Nanak, Farid or any other *Sant-Bhakt-Fakir* can easily be established separately. But by putting them together and categorically calling all of them *Sant tradition* only creates a conceptual entity but shows nothing in reality. The more they are lumped together in the class of Sants, the stronger entity they create and evolve into the notion called Sant Parampara that gives it a rather classical name and meaning. Such a religious reality of the medieval period is recognized and evolves into the notion of a Sant tradition. Its integrity grew and achieved a metaphysical status from the various impressions, the writings, and the pattern of living, the love of the transcendental and the respectful relations of the Sants for each other as well as with the people. Ordinary people believed that Sants were closer to God; therefore, their own closeness to them will yield enlightenment. This, besides becoming a tradition, has become a phenomenon in Indian culture that has become a value that grants a special place to the Sants in the cultural life the people. This value has become the foundation of many cults that, in the modern times, have mushroomed into the foreign lands. Now, the whole world knows who are the *Sants, Sadhus, Swamis, Babas, Yogis, and Rishi -Munis*. Generally, they all have common explainable spiritual ties leading into the classical Hinduism as well as to the cultural practices of the people of India.

Scholars, looking at the Sant tradition express

doubts about the specific identity of it. Mark Jurgensmeyer says, "where may the Sant tradition be found today? In one sense everywhere, for throughout the popular religious culture of modern India, the presence of the medieval Sants is ubiquitous"¹². Though this is generally a true observation and supports the point that there is not any specific determination of Sant tradition as such let alone some Sant ideology or a specific school of consolidated Sant teachings. Bruce Lawrence is also skeptical in saying, "one must marvel that so little can be said with assurance about the origin, early development and the geographical provenance of the Sants."¹³. The probe to know what, specifically, is the Sant tradition continues. Charlotte Vaudeville, referring to Parashuram Chattervedi, says, "Sant mut (the teachings of the Sants) and Sant Parampara ((the tradition of the Sants) are modern concepts. The term Sant actually has no precise meaning. Parashuram Chattervedi defines a Sant as one who observes Satyr (truth) or Sudhan astitva (pure way of being)."¹⁴. These thoughts make Sants, the people who adopt the mode of living that keeps them attuned to the path of seekers of divine reality. Charlotte Vaudeville further pursues this thought, referring to a Sakhi of Kabir, and gives a definition of a Sant,

"Absence of hatred and desire,
A tender love for the Lord,
Detachment from the pleasures of the senses,
Such are the marks of a Sant,"¹⁵

These ideas give us the impression that the Sant tradition draws from various religious strains like Tantric yoga, asceticism, Bhakti, Kabir, including Sufi mystics which are readily available during the medieval period and welded into this concept. This produces an undifferentiated complex of religious ideologies that could be called the way of the Sants or *Sant Parampara*. This tradition is loosely understood to be there but does not show any specific school of thought that we can discover historically linking to Guru Nanak's theological origins. Again, we pose a fresh and pointed question, what is this Sant tradition? What

are its contents and who is its founder? This gives us an impression of something being there in the metaphysical sense but hard to define specifically. Medieval Northern India, as stated before, is full of many *Sants*, *bhakts*, *fakirs* and mystics including Guru Nanak who aspire to leave their home, disconnecting from the world, embrace the lore of transcendental reality known as (*virag*), the stage of spiritual melancholy. This mode of life is romanticized by folklore by many in some parts of India,

*"Huth mein kmundal buggle me sota,
charon dasha jagiri mein,
man lagae yar faqiri mein."*¹⁶

Eng. Trans. Water jug in hand and a stick under arm, all directions are my own, O, I am in love with faqiri."

So any one can be a viragi (taken up by (*virage*) and wander to any direction in his romantic pursuit to connect with the transcendence and to gain ecstasy and salvation. This mode of life is a powerful experience of the human spirit and is generally admired by the people in India. This mode of experience makes Miran Bai's *bhajans* so popular in India. One may be intrigued by observing the respect and alms given to Sants and Sadhus without any reservation. This has attracted many Westerners, copying Sant mode, wearing saffron or white robes, wandering through the unfamiliar places in India and enjoying the privileges owed to the Sant identity. Wealthy people have built cottages dispersed in the countryside near the populated areas for the sojourn of the wandering Sants and Faqirs with whom they associate and give food in the hope to get enlightened. This practice is continued in India from the ancient time. There is no stipulation as to who comes and stays in those places which attracts all and every kind regardless of their affiliation with any tradition, cult or religion. As long as they have the appearance of a Sant, they are welcomed.

Sant category is too broad to tie any specific religious ideology or a seeker to it. Many bhakats

of the medieval period, whether of *saguna* or *nirguna* persuasion easily fit in this category. The Sant pattern or Sant mode, becoming an Indian cultural value, has gone so deeply in the consciousness of the people that this mode naturally commands respect though most of the Sants never demand it. This practice of the Indian society holds *Sants* in as high esteem as Chinese society holds scholars.

Historical accounts of Guru Nanak's life, his travel and leaving his family and engaging in theological discourses with others show a definite Sant mode but to read more than that into this without concrete and verifiable evidences is casting a scholarly net too far into the realm of contingencies for a valuable catch. The Historian's urge to seek such evidences is commendable but that is as far as it goes.

As we perceive, Guru Nanak had a clear vision and mission, as stated by him in his "*Bani*", as he sets out to go and preach others. However, we cannot discount and minimize any possible effect of the circumstances of the time on Guru Nanak in which he reflected. As Grewal says, "On the whole, it was the rich and lively atmosphere. And it was this atmosphere that Guru Nanak breathed".¹⁷ However, it is difficult to determine any specific influence on him from this atmosphere but such atmosphere indeed gave more impetus to the growth and acceptance of his own thought. Grewal further clarifies any historical influence on Guru Nanak by saying, "Kabir's influence on Guru Nanak has been emphasized or assumed by many a writer. Recently this assumption has been seriously challenged,"¹⁸. Therefore, the search of finding the antecedents of Sikhism may lead us nowhere and we may have to concede to the idea that the origin of Sikhism is not historical. Bhai Vir Singh states in the *Sri Guru Partap Suraj Parkash*, that the origin of Sikhism is not historical but revelatory.¹⁹ Relying on these arguments we may have to reject the idea that Guru Nanak's vision is historical in nature or develops as a Sant synthesis. We, therefore reach

to the conclusion that the historical road to reach Guru Nanak's mind is closed. So we are left to rely on the theological inquiry alone where the realm of Guru Nanak's transcendental reality is to be found.

[This article first appeared in The Sikh Review of March 2002. To be continued...ED]

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SIKHISM: ACADEMIC FORUM Guru Nanak's Mind & Historical Research

Part 3 of 3

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To assess the impact of the medieval period on Guru Nanak though a complex problem, we only reflect, in general, the spirit and the impressions of the medieval religious reality that appears to be hovering on the horizon. We have discussed this

issue, more in detail, under the heading, Medieval Religious Reality in the 2nd part of this series, published in the May 2003 issue of the Sikh Bulletin. Now, we will, in this discussion, only recall the spirit of the medieval religious atmosphere at the time of Guru Nanak.

10. Medieval Religious Spirit

The distinct feature of the *Bhagti* movement, at this time, was that it was appealing to the common man, and popularized the awareness of religious vitality, and seemed to bring God closer to man. This added new excitement and meaning in their lives, and the effect of producing a new religious consciousness in the society. It also produced new and popular literature, music and art, depicting the scenes of the stories and moods of the *saints*, which transformed the spiritual landscape of Northern India. Since its contents came out of the classical Hindu, Sufi, and Islamic traditions, it did not push the traditional religious ground away from the people, but instead pulled them together in a new religious fervor. The devotees or the *Bhagats* brought *Rama*, *Krishna* and the face of *Allah* closer to man's daily life than perceiving it far removed on the metaphysical plane, which had been the case for centuries. Now they could feel and experience a religious spirit in their bones, through its poetry and music. The *Bhajans* and *Qwalis* that made religious experience vital became part of daily life to make it meaningful. Such a spirit easily crossed the rigid lines of accepted religions. *Bhagats* such as Kabir, who spoke boldly against the strict Islamic or Hindu restrictions that held people to the repressive lower status of social existence, began to feel freedom in their minds. This new spirit of the age was readily accepted and united people, giving them new hope. The effects of this new spirit have been long lasting, in certain layers of society, which, for a sensitive eye, are observable to this day. *Bhagat* Kabir and Farid are often quoted by people in their conversations. People became fond of engaging in *Mahrfat* (inquiry among the lovers of the transcendence). Guru Nanak was fond of such occasions as evident by his *Bani Sidh Ghost* and

the conversations with the Sufis, particularly with Sheikh Ibrahim of Pak Pattan, as referred before. Guru Nanak, being a mystic himself, attracted Sufi mystics who felt kinship with him. One can experience such a spirit present as one reads or listens the *Bani* of Sheikh Farid. His *Bani* lifts the mind to the truth of the eventuality of human life on earth. This brings universal truth to the mind of man.

The Classical Hinduism came into contact with Islam as well as with Sufi mysticism prior to the 14th and 15th century which brought new dimensions of various religious contents and mentors together. Some scholars rightly classify this period as having the plurality of religious traditions. It brought the unity among other mystics whether of Hindu orientation or Muslim. The full credit for such a spirit of religiosity goes to the *Bhagats* like Kabir Farid, Mira Bai, Nam Dev, Guru Nanak and others. The respect of the *Bhagats*, who spoke fearlessly and gave people confidence to pursue religion on their own freed them from listening to the Pundits and their rigid methods of *tapas* which were full of restrictions. The rigid dogmas of the traditional religions began to crumble, which benefited the lower social classes, who have been oppressed in the class distinctions for centuries. These factors cross-fertilized and produced a new vital reality of its own.

This new reality produced the dynamics of mysticism and humanism. The *Bhajans of the Bhagats* and their writings achieved supremacy. In this atmosphere of romantic love of the divine, in which *bhagats* were speaking freely, brought hope to people for their salvation. In a sense, *Bhagats*, including **Guru Nanak who delivered the new vision of “life divine” without the hierarchy of Brahmins made the growth of Sikhism easier since his message of experiencing God within man, coincided with that of the Bhagats.**

Such a spirit of the poetic age of religious mysticism does blur the clear scholarly distinctions of the contents of traditional

Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and other system of thought. The use of common words to express the religious experiences of various leanings and their usage got cross-fertilized. Terms such as *Gian*, *Muksha* and *Virag* are strictly meaningful during this period since they commonly lead one to what the *Bhagats* were saying in their writings. This terminology leads one easily to trace their Sanskrit origins. This factor further complicates the intellectual distinctions and meanings and usage. Terms such as *Hari*, *Bhagwan*, *Khuda*, *Khassam*, *Rahim*, *Maya*, *Sahj* and many others, created a new complex of language (milieu)

This trend of common usage of language encouraged unity as well as opportunity of open interaction among many *Saints*, *Sanyasis*, *Bhagats*, *Yogis* and *Fakirs*. Also, the elements of Sufism, for instance, blended in the literature of the medieval period and brought the philosophical and religious meanings of the terms such as *Fana*, *Baka*, *Hallal*, *Hukam*, *Raza*, and *Sahj* into the common and popular usage. This situation obviously presented some difficulties in the effort to trace scholarly origins of religious doctrines.

The overwhelming impact of the cultural, theological and linguistic milieu of the medieval period also created a paradoxical situation for the people as well as for the scholars who sought a more clear logical ground to seek historical links to some of the religious movements. How would you deal with the cross-cultural terminology such as found in the writings of the *Adi Granth*? This period creates a new field of religious reality in which Arabic and Persian terms such as *Ishaq*, *Mohabut*, *Rte-rung*, *Parvardghar*, *Khair*, *Bakshundgi* and many more occur and makes the interpretation of theology rather difficult. These terms indeed became part of Sikhism and bring new understanding of other traditions closer. The meanings and the usage of the terms like *Raza*, *Sahj*, *Saien*, *Hari*, *Maya*, *Hukam* and many others of common usage, would strike a strong cord of possible historical connections and legitimately suggest that there could be a possible link to Guru

Nanak coming from other religious traditions. The meaning, and the usage of the commonly used terms in each case may coincide in spirit but in actuality such terms may belong specifically to another religious tradition.

Guru Nanak, being a medieval man does not mean that his own vision is wrapped up with the other medieval religious contents and may have made it impossible to emerge independently. What could possibly prevent it from happening? **How and why revelations occur, we probably will never know. All we have is the power of reasoning and beyond that we may have to have a supernatural capacity to know for which human beings are lacking.**

During the 15th century onwards for about another 300 years or so the political effects on the cultural history of Northern India are predominantly of Mughals. This effect is continuous since the Muslim population in India has grown large enough to sustain it. Islamic culture does claim the second place. Therefore any development in the Indian culture of religious nature will always have Muslim reactions to it.

Modern India, with its large population of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Christians, constitutes a new political and social reality, but clearly maintains its medieval religious character. It has hammered each religious tradition to the understanding of the limits of the other. In spite of the occasional conflicts the reality of each tradition is fairly safe.

Both Kabir and Guru Nanak's thoughts, coinciding with the overall message of the *Bhagati* movement, added to the true spirit of humanism. The liberal elements of Sikh theology following Guru Nanak continued to be practiced on the same lines which is evident by adding *Bhagat Bani* of Muslim and Hindu *saints* in the *Adi Granth* by the succeeding 6th Guru Arjan (1563-1606). Emperor Akbar, who advanced his own new religion along the similar liberal lines called "*Din Allahi*",

coincided with that of the Gurus. Khushwant Singh states, "Emperor Akbar was impressed by the Guru's work, for it echoed the beliefs he held sacred. On one occasion he stopped at Goindwal for the express purpose of meeting the Guru".²⁰ The social distinctions of the caste system and its rationale were challenged by this new message of the *Bhagti* movement as well as by Guru Nanak's teachings, which evidently put Sikhism on the road of acceptance and growth.

Hardly fifty years had passed, when the Mughal policies under the Emperor Jahangir, during the early 17th century, contrary to his father, posed harsh policies to squelch the growth of Sikhism. The death of Guru Arjan by torture in 1606, changed the social and political course of the Sikh tradition altogether. The Sikhs adopted militarism, as a way to protect themselves. His son, Hargobind, who was a young boy of only eleven years at the time, was entrusted with the enormous responsibility of defending the growing Sikh community. As the community grew the struggle for its survival became intense and reached to a crescendo under the tenth Guru Gobind Singh who during the late 17th century openly showed defiance and challenged the emperor Aurangzeb. Mughal policies forced the Sikhs on to the path of open warfare. The 17th century relays a spectacular series of dramatic events of the political struggle of the Sikhs against the Mughals. It demonstrated how religious tradition survives under repeated loss of spiritual leadership.

The political realities of Northern India, under the Mughals, revealed what the *Bhagati* movement tried to achieve. This situation created a paradox for the people who cherished humanism and love of liberal theological values, but ended up in serious and continuous religious conflict with the political power of the Mughals. This situation had a long lasting effect on Sikhism and changed it from a contemplative community into a community of brave soldiers. The modern India seems to be deeply caught up in uniting Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other religions under the

umbrella of a secular democracy, which still is a distant dream. Hindu nationalism seen to have a different dream for India, which obviously threatens to destroy Humanism, ushered in by the spirit of the medieval period. Generally, man yearns for peace and love of mankind but it is always a little yonder from where man lives. India and its people are no exception.

11. Monism & Monotheism:

It is necessary to distinguish Monism and Monotheism so that we clearly understand where Guru Nanak's belief system is based. The definition of Monism is the belief that there is ONE ultimate substance or principle, whether mind or matter like water, earth or any one physical substance as source out of all that is created. But Monotheism is the theory that ONE GOD is the source of all the creation. This distinction is elaborated by the evolutionists (scientists) and the religionists (believers in God). Guru Nanak's *Karta Purkh* is an active creator of the world phenomenon, which makes Guru Nanak a Monotheist although some scholars inaccurately consider him a Monist. Among the early Greeks, Monists such as Thales (580 B.C.) held that the water is the basic stuff out of which all things are made. We perceive both Kabir and Guru Nanak, contrary to seeking the one source of physical reality, holding the belief in One God, are Monotheists rather than Monists. We classify Guru Nanak as a qualified monotheist (one God with specific attributes) as has been previously referred. Both Kabir and Guru Nanak believe in ONE GOD but with different emphasis and variations. Guru Nanak's concept of God is very specific in the concept of *Karta Purkh*. It is authoritative and judicial.

Many *Bhagats* of the medieval period are generally *nirgunias*, mystics believing in God without attributes as pure spirit. They posed no threat to Sikh theology, since they all are Monotheists hence complementary. To clearly perceive Guru Nanak's Monotheistic vision J. S. Grewal indicates, in his discussion and quotes

Majeeb M. by saying, “**Guru Nanak was not a reformer. This simple but refreshing enunciation is followed by the logical explanation that: ‘we know he was not a Hindu who appealed to the Hindu scriptures in order to reform Hindu society. We know he was not a Muslim trying to eradicate evils in Muslim society by speaking to Qur’an. Furthermore, in the teachings of Guru Nanak, there is no attempt at a reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam; both are set aside in order ‘to get at the source of religion itself’. Guru Nanak is thus ‘an originator, a founder for his own ideals, he speaks with the voice of authority which appears to spring directly from his moral and metaphysical convictions.’**”²¹.

It is very complex problem to assert that various Monotheistic thoughts may be connected somehow. As we briefly scan the world’s Monotheistic beliefs, we find the belief in One God has been perceived and practiced in many religious traditions long before Guru Nanak. During the first half of the 14th B.C., Tutankhamen, the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt, held the belief in One God and commanded his subject to follow it. Judeo-Christian tradition has Theistic belief in its roots called Jehovah (God) and holds the prominent place in the Bible, which is believed to be the word of God. Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God and was sent to this world by him so that mankind may be saved from original sin. The Islamic tradition held the notion of One God since the 7th century, almost seven hundred years before Guru Nanak. In the Greek tradition, during the 4th and 5th century B.C. Plotinus, Plato, Aristotle, and others held the belief in One God. In Greek mythology, like the Hindu mythology Gods and Goddesses were worshipped quite commonly. Some were clearly defined while the others were assumed to exist. During the medieval period in Europe, the scholastic philosophers argued vigorously to demonstrate the existence of God so that people would believe in Him. The effort of man to know God, in almost in every human tradition, has been the concern of man. Although

the knowledge of God does not go beyond faith in Him but faith is not knowledge, it is a dynamic of experience. **It is important for man to have faith so that he finds some authority, beyond himself that guides this world including him.** This seems to be main reason people believe in God. Those who deny such belief have their reason to do so.

In Hindu tradition, *Brahman* (God) has always been in existence in its Vedic roots. Sankara, in the 8th century, interprets *Vedas* and glorifies *Brahman* in developing the theory of Transcendentalism (Vedanta). Ramanuja, during the 11th century develops the theory of Theism while critiquing Sankara’s Vedanta theory by saying that his God is somewhere in the sky and cares little for man and this world. In the 13th century, Ramananda brought these ideas to Northern India and developed this as ground for Vaisnavas. Its Theistic elements gave rise and vigor to the *Bhagti* movement that has widely influenced the people of Northern India. In fact, many scholars attempt to link historical threads of *Bhagati* movement to Guru Nanak, coming out from Tantric Yogis and Naths as well as Kabir.

Radhakrishnan holds the opinion that there are independent grounds for the development of Theism in India. Guru Nanak’s vision stated in *Mul Mantra* as in *Jap Ji*, the first *Bani* of the *Adi Granth* sustains his theory of Monotheism.

12. Sant Bhasha:

Guru Nanak, being a medieval man used medieval language called *Sant Bhasha*. What is *Sant Bhasha*? It is not a specific language but a hybrid of many languages and regional dialects. The language of the *Adi Granth* therefore is a common reservoir for all this terminology that connects back to Hinduism and Islam. Gurus successive to Guru Nanak have made ample use of these terms. For example, the term *Khuda* a-e that occurs in the *Adi Granth* 32 times, which Guru Nanak uses 11 times. *Kadar* occurs in the *Adi Granth* 32 times and Guru Nanak uses it 11 times, *Kadar/kadru* occurs in the *Adi Granth* 4 times and Guru Nanak

uses it 2 times, *Kartar/kartari* occurs in the Adi Granth 52 times and Guru Nanak uses it 13 times, *Karim/karimu* occurs in the Adi Granth 9 times and Guru Nanak uses it 3 times, *Khasam, /khasami/khasamu* occurs in the Adi Granth 175 times and Guru Nanak uses it 55 times, *Bhagwan/Bhagwanu* occurs in the Adi Granth 59 times, and Guru Nanak uses it 1 time, and the term *Hari*, occurs 9289 times in the Adi Granth but Guru Nanak use it 588 times.²² Guru Nanak used more *Lehndi Punjabi* than other Gurus while Guru Gobind Singh used more *Brij* than other Gurus though his writings are not part of the Adi Granth; nonetheless, it is part of the sacred writings of the Sikhs. Macauliffe says, “The medieval Indian dialects in which the sacred writing of the Sikh Gurus and Saints were composed. hymns are found in Persian, mediaeval Prakrit, Hindi, Marathi, old Punjabi, Multani, and several local dialects. In several hymns the Sanskrit and Arabic vocabularies are drawn upon.”²³ As the *Bhagats* and *Sants* of the Northern region of India, including Guru Nanak, freely traveled to far off places they met and conversed with diverse people incorporating the new terminology in their conversations and writings. These terminologies carry various meanings, shades and hues whose analysis has bearings on the accuracy of relevant belief systems. They are extremely important to deal with which will involve philological and etymological considerations.

C. Shackle, who classifies the Adi Granth’s language, as ‘The Sacred Language of the Sikhs’ (SLS) which is composed of three sources namely, Torki, coming from Islamic tradition, Sahaskriti, coming from Hindu tradition and South-Western, from Regional sources of the South-West, says, “The core language of the AG- that mixture of Punjabi and Western Hindi (including Khari Boli and, later especially, Braj) - as completing the set of dichotomies suggested by the three peripheral varieties.”²⁴ These views are also shared by Harkirat Singh who states, “The language used by the Sants and the language of the Adi Granth does not have any standards of usages. Guru Nanak

used his native *Lendi Punjabi*, Farid used *Multani*, Kabir and Namdev used *Purbi-Hindi and Marathi*.²⁵ The terms like *Devas, Datas, Avatars, Kadar karim, khuda, Ishaq, Muhabut, Parvardgar, Khair, Bukhshandgi, Hukam, Raza, Saein, Sahib* and many others are commonly used by all the Gurus and the *Bhagats* in the Adi Granth. Guru Nanak is a frequent user of many of these terms. Therefore, it is plausible to seek historical links from relative religious traditions to Guru Nanak whether these links are valid and verifiable is another matter. As we seek the genesis of Guru Nanak’s thought, our treatment has to go clearly beyond linguistic meanings and expressions, otherwise we will under assess the nature of his theology. After all, words and sounds, the body of any language, are only vehicles for the actual experience of the mind. Language carries, not makes the mental reality whatever its nature may be. The reality of any language is only real when we communicate, write or utter a sound. It is a tool of expression only. Mind, not the language, is the only source of creation and experience. The language of *Sant Bhasha* in which Guru Nanak is supposed to have written and spoken with other seekers, therefore is strictly a medium without which it would have been extremely difficult to communicate. In Buddhism, for instance, silence is considered a language, which means that the expression of the body without sound is perceived as a language in itself. They call the complete silence of a Zen monk, portrayed in art and titled, “thundering silence” which for an ordinary person appears to be a contradiction in terms.

Since the language and the substance of the belief system are two different categories. We need to perceive their workings together while recognizing the conjunction of the two. Belief system is primary having its own substance and category while the language is secondary tool, a vehicle to carry out the belief system to others, is a separate category. Therefore, we have to perceive Guru Nanak’s thought, in the category of the metaphysical reality of his mind, transcending the ordinary language category. Without this

distinction it would be difficult to perceive the true nature of Guru Nanak's theology.

Our concern here is to examine the role of language and its terminology as it is used in the inferences and becomes the tool of history to draw historical conclusions. The various terminologies suggesting connections and influences on Guru Nanak, therefore, come under strict analytical scrutiny, whose validity may be difficult to prove. Previously, in the early part of our discussion, we have analyzed the term "*Sahj*" in this context to show that it failed to work as an evidence to show Kabir's and Nath's influence on Guru Nanak. The same treatment can be applied to other terms that are commonly used.

In *Rag Maru, Mohala 1*, in the 22 *Sohlas*, the reflections of Guru Nanak's mind, using Hindu terminology, describes the nature of the divine Being, prior to the creation of *Vedas, Shastras*, and the *Puranas* including *Krishna and the Gopies*.²⁶ This belief of Guru Nanak in this context, clearly establishes that his vision has to be perceived beyond the heavy use of Hindu terminology. It is hard to understand some of the scholarly views of Dorothy Field, T.C. Archer, Tara Chand, Hew McLeod and several other western scholars who hold the view that Hinduism more than Islam provides the ground for Guru Nanak's theological vision. Similarly, inferences used by other scholars based on the terms like *Hukam, Raza Saian, Patshah* and others assume to show the influence of Islam. Obviously, Islam's presence in Northern India for almost 500 years prior to Guru Nanak provides strong grounds, like Hinduism, for the plausibility of such conclusions. Any such historical assumptions have to be demonstrated in the valid and verifiable arguments before they are acceptable as true. It appears that, if historical methodology and the historical assumptions are not critically examined, the story of discovering Guru Nanak's total reality will remain elusive and inaccurate. The arguments based on *Sant* inheritance, language terminology and meanings of the terms, which come under serious scrutiny, do lose their validity. Hence, the

Sant and *Sant* synthesis and many other traceable elements that can be alleged to provide Guru Nanak's theological vision, are nothing more than accumulations of plausibility. They reveal more about the religious setting of the late 15th and early 16th century Northern India than providing specific antecedence to Guru Nanak's thought. If Guru Nanak draws his theological message from both of the traditions referred to above then the distinctness and the independent growth of his theology would be hard to explain accurately. We cannot therefore, clearly establish and measure the originality of Guru Nanak's mind if we rely on seeking some historical influences on him no matter in what shape and form they are presented. Therefore, the shadow of historical assessments of Guru Nanak's theological vision is inaccurate and a futile activity, which is, not more than a metaphysical fantasy. During the medieval period in Europe, the scholastic philosophers argued vigorously to show proofs for the existence of God so that people would believe in Him. The effort of man to know God, in almost every tradition, has been most important concern of man. Though the knowledge of God does not go beyond faith in Him but faith is not knowledge but a dynamic of experience. It is important that faith guides man's action for living a life that could be acceptable to Him. This appears to be the reason people have faith, hence give religion a prominent place in society.

13. Conclusion:

Accumulatively, in the three articles (two previously published in The Sikh Bulletin of April and May 2003 under the same heading "*Guru Nanak's Mind & Historical Research*") and this one, have carried the same argument that **Guru Nanak's theological vision is independent and not arrived or derived from other existing religious traditions such as Hinduism, Islam, Sufis or any school of Nath, Sant or Bhagati movement so popular at the time of Guru Nanak during 15th and 16th century.** We have analyzed the terminology, their meanings and usage to show that the belief of Guru Nanak can

be understood if we transcend the mechanics of language and their usage and meanings, which control human thought. Logical applications, in examining the inferences and the conclusions, have been applied as carefully as possible.

We have argued that the metaphysical status of the *Mul Mantra* is the original expression of Guru Nanak's belief system. We perceive that this basic belief slowly emerges into his theological system, which we have classified as the theory of Qualified Monotheism. This is clearly stated by him in *Jap Ji*, the first *Bani* of the *Adi Granth*. It can easily lead us to interpret, systematically, to full-fledged 'Theory of Ethical Realism in Sikhism'. Though the *Bani* is difficult to be systematized since it is written in poetic form, carrying esoteric terminology that is used cross culturally, this difficulty is possible to overcome, somewhat with a good working knowledge of Punjabi language and Sanskrit philosophical terminology. Besides this, one can make more progress provided one has some knowledge of analytic processes so that ambiguities are eliminated. We have tried to do all that in this inquiry to explore Guru Nanak's mind and hope the results are acceptable.

The best empirical evidence of the reality of Sikhism (Sikh Theology and culture) is that it has emerged, grown and withstood all odds and continues to maintain its uniqueness. This fact is irrefutable.

Notes and References:

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[Part 1 and 2 in this series have appeared in The Sikh Review of Nov. 2001 and March 2002, respectively. This part 3 will be published in a forthcoming issue. ED]

ਬੁੱਢੇ ਐਕਟਰ ਮੰਗਲ ਢਿੱਲੋਂ ਦੀ
?ਫਿਲਮ 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕੋਤਕ'

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਵੀਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਾਹਮਣ ਤੇ ਮੁੱਲਾਂ ਮੋਲਾਣੇਜੋਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ , ਦਾ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੋੜਮਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਪਹਿਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਇਸ ਵੀਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਗੀਤੀਜੇ ਅਤੇ ਚੌਥੇ , ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ , ਨ ਦੇਵ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਦੇਦੇ ਇਕ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜ ਸੱਭ ਬਾਗੀ। ਜਾਣੀ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਰੱਬਸਾਰੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ , ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਇਕ ਹੈ , ਸਾਰੇ ਇਕੋ ਦੇ ਜਾਏ ਹਨ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ , ਹਨ ਛੇਵੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਤਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਘਰੀਂ ਵੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਵਿਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਰੱਜ ਕੇ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਮਿਸਲਾਂ ਵੇਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਖੁੱਲੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ ਲੋਕਮਾਲਕ , ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ , ਹੀ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਯੋਧੇ ਰਣਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਲੜਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਮਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਨਿਘਾਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਅੱਖ ਪੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖ ਸਕੇ। , ਵੇਲੇ ਹੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਹਿਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡ ਕੇ 1947 ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਨਾਸ ਮਾਰਨ , ਅੱਧਾ ਓਧਰ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਧਾ ਓਧਰ ਦੀ ਰਣਨੀਤੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਫਿਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ , ਦੀ ਹੱਦ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ , ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਗਲ , ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਤੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਰ ਚਾਕੂ ਚਲਾਇਆਤੇ ਹੋ।

ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ 20 , ਸਾਧਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋੜਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੈਸਾ ਧੋਲਾ ਲੁਟਿਆ

ਵਿਦਿਆ ,ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਗੈਰਤ ਬਣਾਇਆ ,ਇਜਤ ਆਬਰੂ ਲੁੱਟੀ ਰਹਿੰਤ ਕੀਤਾਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਖਤਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ , ਰਹਿਣੀ ਬਹਿਣੀ ਖਤਮ ਕੀਤੀ। ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਕੁੱਝ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਗ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ 1906 ਜਮਾਤ ਕਾਬਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ-ਹੇਠ ਕੋਈ ਲੋਟੂ। ਇਸੇ ਸਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਹੇਠ ਪੰਜ ਅਤਰੇਅਤਰਾ) ਅਉਤਰੇ / ਅਤਰਾ ਰੇਰੂ ਵਾ ,ਚੀਮਨਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾਲਾ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਰਾੜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਣਿਆਅਤਰਾ ਅੱਤਲੇ ਵਾਲਾ ਅਤੇ ,ਅਤਰਾ ਘੁਣਸਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ , (ਅਤਰਾ ਜਲਾਲਾਬਾਦੀ ਵਿਸਟ ਵਾਲਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਚਿੱਟਾ ਚੋਲਾਹੱਥ ਮਾਲਾ ਤੇ ,ਮੂੰਗੀ ਦੀ ਦਾਲ , ਪੈਰੀਂ ਖੜਾਵਾਂ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇਹ ਅੱਖਰੋਂ ਕੋਰੇ ਸਾਧ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਮਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦਾ-ਅੰਧ , ਜਾਲ ਵਿਛਾਇਆ ਗਿਆਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ , ਗਿਆ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈ ਰਣਧੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਟ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਖੰਡ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜੱਥਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਤਿਹਾੜ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਰਮਾਲਾ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਟ ਕਰਕੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ' ਬਣਾ ਕੇ 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ' ਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ 'ਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਡਿਗਰੀਆਂ ਵੰਡੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਰਾਪੁਰਬੱਲਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਸਾਧ ਦੀ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਟਲੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਬਾਦਲ ਕਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਪੈਸ਼ਲ ਹਵਾਈ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਜਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਦਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਚੇਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਵਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਅਰਬਾਂ ਖਰਬਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਵੇਟ ਜ਼ਾਇਦਾਦ ਦਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ।

ਇਸੇ ਹੀ ਲੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਤੋਰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ 1990 ਕੀਤਾ ਐਸ ਪੈਦਾ.ਏ.ਸਾਬਕਾ ਆਈ ,ਵਿਚ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟਦਾ ਹੈ 'ਦੂਖ ਨਿਵਾਰਣ ਕੈਂਪ' ਜੇ। ਟੋਰਾਂਟੋ ,ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ,ਚ ਆਏ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ' ਸਵਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਵੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਬਾਜਵਾ ਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ੇਦਾਰੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਔਰਤ ਦੀ ਦਵਾਈ ਛਡਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਟਨ ਨਾਲ ਠੀਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਆਪ ਪੈਸੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਚੱਲਦੀ ਵਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਵਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਇਸ ਗੁੰਝ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਲਿਖਵਾਇਆ ਕੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੱਲਿਆ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਫਲਾਣੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਕਰਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਲਹੌਰ ਵਿਚ 'ਤੇਤਾ ਰਟਨੀ'

ਹਾਦਤ ਤੋਂ ਬੱਚ ਸਕਾਂਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਸ਼ਟਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼। ਇਸ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਜਵਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਵੀ ਆਈਹੈ .ਐਸ.ਏ.। ਇਸੇ ਲੜੀ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹਨ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ,ਨੂਰ ਮਹਿਲੀਏ ,ਅਸ਼ੂਤੋਸ਼ੀਏ , ਟਕੇਸਾਲੀਏ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਘਰ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠੀਆਂ ਪੁੱਛਾਂ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਚੁੜੇਲਾਂਔਰਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਛੋਟੇ / ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਧ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਘੱਟ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਪੰਜ ਗੁਣਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਤੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਕੈਸਿਟ ਸੁਣੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਆਪ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਪ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਪੰਗਤੀਆਂ ਚੁਣ ਕੇ ਦਿਓ। ਮੈਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੰਗਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਰਟਨ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਪਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਵਲੋਂ ਉਤਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਰਮਾਲੇ ਵਾਂਗੂ ਜਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲਫਾਫਾ ਜਮਾ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁੱਝ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ ਅਨਕੂਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।

ਲਓਹੁਣ ਸੁਣੋ ਮੰਗਲ ਢਿਲੋਂ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ !! ਇਹ ਬੰਦਾ 2000 ਵਿਚ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਆਇਆ 2001 ਜਾਂ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਫਿਲਮ ਵਿਖਾਈ ਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਚਿੱਟੀ ਚਾਦਰ ਵਿਛਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਦਿਲ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਦਾਨ ਦਿਓ ਤਾਂਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਉਹ ਫਿਲਮ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਸੀ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਸ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਡਾਕੂਮੈਂਟਰੀ ਫਿਲਮ ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਪ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪੈਸਾ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਟੋਰਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਮਾਈ ਘੱਟ ਗਈ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਂਗੂ ਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਫਿਲਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੀ ਸਾਬਤ ਕ 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕੌਤਕ' ਫਲਾਣਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਫਲਾਣੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਫਲਾਣਾ ਫਲਾਣੀ ਬਿਮਾਰੀ ਦਾ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੌਤਕਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੱਲਿਆ , ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕਠਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਠੇਡੇ

ਖਾਂਦਾ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਦਾ ਲੰਬਾ ਸਫਰ ਤਹਿ ਕਰ ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ 35,000 ਗਿਆ। ਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਚੱਲਿਆਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ , ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਰਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਦੀ ਬੀੜ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਵਾਈ 'ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ'।

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਐਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਲੜਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਰਟਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਮੁਗਲੀਆ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦਾ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਬਦਲ ਦਿੰਦੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਪਈ ਸੀ ਸਾਲ ਪੈਦਲ ਤੁਰ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ 27-26 ਦੇਣ ਦੀ। ਅਰਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਬੇ ਬਕਾਲੇ ਭੋਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਾਂ ਵਾਂਗਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਤੇ ਐਸ਼ 'ਚਰਨ ਘੁਟਵਾਉਂਦੇ' ਕਰਦੇ। ਇਹੀ ਕੁੱਝ ਤਾਂ ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ ਵੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਹਿਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਰਾਜਭਾਗ ਲਈ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਨੱਥ - ਪਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਮੰਗਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਢਿਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਕੜੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੰਗਲ ਢਿਲੋਂ ਦਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਾਂਦਟ ਜਟਾਣਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੜਾ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਬਠਿੰਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਬਾਪ ਕੱਕਾ ਸ਼ਰਾਬੀ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਘੱਰ ਦੀ ਕੱਢੀ ਨਾਲ। ਇਸਦੇ ਨਾਨਕੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪੰਜਗਰਾਈਂ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਫਰੀਦ ਕੋਟ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਨਾਨਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਨ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਮੰਗਲ ਢਿਲੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਭੋਰਾ ਵੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਏਜੰਡੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਹੁਣ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਅਥਰਵਣ ਵੇਦ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਉਸ ਵੇਦ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਰਫ ਟੂਣੇ ਟਾਮਣ ਹੀ ਲਿਖੇ ਹਨ। ਮੰਗਲ ਢਿਲੋਂ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਕੈਲੇਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਸਟੇਟ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਮਜਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਾਉਣ ਲਈ 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕੋਤਕਫਿਲਮ' ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਡਾਲਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੂੰਜਾ ਫੇਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਹੈ। ਦੇਖੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ, ਕਿਸੇ ਸਾਮਰਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਰੀਤੀ ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਆਫਕ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਮਰਾਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੱਜ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਜਿਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਮਾਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਪਸੰਦ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਲਜ਼ਾਮ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ

ਲੱਗਦਾ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸਿਰ ਦੁਖਦੇ ਦੀਗੋਡਿਆਂ ਗ , ਿਟਿਆਂ ਦੀ , ਜ਼ਮੀਨ , ਨੂੰਹ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੀ , ਨੂੰਹ ਸੱਸ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੀ ਡਿਗਦੇ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਕੰਧ ਦੀ ਮੁਰੰਮਤ , ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੀ ਲਾਉਣ (ਪੰਕਚਰ) ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਟਾਇਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਂਚਰ ਲਈ ਆਦਿ ਬਿਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਜ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖੀ ਗਈ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਨਿਆਸਰਿਆਂ , ਸਗੋਂ ਨਿਹੱਥਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਲਈ ਭੂਖਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪੇਟ ਦੀ , ਲਈ ਅੱਗ ਬੁਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਖੋਹੇ ਗਏ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਲਈ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੰਡੇ ਫੜਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਲਿਖੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਜੇਕਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਜੁਤੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਖਾਣੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਣ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜੰਗੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕਰਵਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਿਤਾਣਿਆ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਖੰਡੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਫੜਾਏ?

ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਦਾਸ,

ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਿਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ

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Theme for the Week:

The religious ritual of bathing is an old and widespread practice across the world. The best-known practice is immersing oneself in a body of water, usually a river. Other acts of the ritual across cultures include ablutions, libations, sprinkling, splashing, pouring and even drinking.

Water is considered to have potency that is life giving and regenerative. While Gurbani treats water as the source of life, travel to a pilgrimage for ritual bathing is discouraged if not rejected outright. The message is clear: No spiritual merit is to be obtained by traveling to a distant place to take a few dips in the hope that this will have salvific value. Gurbani maintains that the spiritual journey is not a physical one, but a journey in consciousness that involves an inversion inwards. It follows that in Sikhi, spiritual bathing is not a physical act, but an immersion in the Guru's wisdom.

This week's selection of words is a blend of two words (pure bath, true bath, perfect bath, etc.), which shed light on **the baths, essential to cleanse our souls, our inner beings.**

ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਵਣੁ (nir-mal naavan)

Meaning: pure, immaculate bath.

Quote:

ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ॥

nir-mal naavan naanakaa gur teerath daree-aau.

O Nanak! The Guru is that sacred place of pilgrimage and river, where one obtains immaculate bath. - Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Granth Sahib, Page 1411

Message: By following our relentless desires and passions, we soil or stain the pristine purity of our souls. Pilgrimage to a holy place and merely washing our bodies in the water will not cleanse us of our wrongs. The body and mind continues to be polluted with its demerits. How does one then wash away the stains, or how does one attain inner purity?

The true pilgrimage is taken when we bathe in the crystal waters of the Guru's wisdom, when we become Guru-oriented and cherish the company of the Guru-centered people. Cleansing ourselves in this way will purify our beings and our souls from the dirt of our wrong doings. This is the bath which when taken will make us spiritually blessed and unsullied.

Keen to Explore Further?

Etymology: Blend of *nir-mal* (pure, immaculate) + *naavan* (bath), from Sanskrit *snaapayati* (causes to bathe, washes) → Pali *nahaapeti* (bathes, washes) → Prakrit *siṇaavedi/ṇhaavei* → Kashmiri *naavun* (to bathe, scrub, scour) → Punjabi *nhaaunaa/nhaunaa* (to wash, to bathe).

Other forms of the word found in the Guru Granth Sahib:

1. ਨਾਵਣੁ/ਨਾਵਣੈ: same as above.
2. ਨਾਵਣ/ਨਾਵਣਿ/ਨਾਵਨ: plural or grammatical inflexions.

Notes: The word ਨਾਇ, *verb* (to bathe) is also used with its various forms such as, ਨਾਵੈ, ਨਾਵਾ, ਨਾਉ, ਨਾਵਹੁ, ਨਾਵਹਿ, ਨਾਵਨਿ, ਨਾਇਆ, ਨਾਤਾ.