

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oankār sat̄ nām kartā purakh̄ nirbh̄o nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibh̄an gur parsād̄.



THE SIKH BULLETIN GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI



January-March 2019

ਪੋਹ-ਚੇਤ ਪਪੌ ਨਾਨਕਸ਼ਾਹੀ

editor@sikhbulletin.com

Volume 21 Number 1

Published by: Hardev Singh Shergill, President, Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc;
3524 Rocky Ridge Way, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, USA Tel: (916) 933-5808
Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc. is a religious tax-exempt California Corporation.

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Co-Editors:

Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD.
Hardev Singh Shergill M.A. M.ED.

Technical Associate

Amrinder Singh

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editor@sikhbulletin.com

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Editorial

Lost in Translation

IN the five and half centuries of Sikh spirituality, Sikhs have never been as disconnected from the spiritual messages contained in Gurbani as they are in the 21st Century. The root cause of such spiritual decline is clear: Sikhs have steadily distanced themselves from the *understanding* of the spiritual messages contained within the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS).

Such distancing from the messages of Gurbani is despite the deep physical connections that Sikhs have nurtured with the physical embodiment (*saroop*) that is the SGGS – in forms including but not limited to making precious offerings; according splendour to its installation; donning it under *palkis* made of gold; parading it around in ostentatious displays called *nagar kirtan*; multiple continuous readings in the style of *Akhand* and *Sehej Paths*; and other physical forms of reverence in the name of religious ritual and dogma.

But Sikhs have remained *disengaged* from the *messages* contained within.

One could say that Sikhs have connected externally but detached from the interior. We have linked with the periphery but fragmented from the core. We have worshipped the container while refusing to have anything to do with its soul nourishing content. We have stood on the platform for long periods of our life, but refused to board the train therein. the more irrelevant its contents are becoming.

We have prospered as a religion, but shrivelled spiritually. It is almost as if we have consciously traded one for the other in reciprocal proportions. The more we connect to the container, the more irrelevant its contents are becoming.

So intense is the disconnect that rare is the Sikh who has the ability to decipher the spiritual messages for himself by *self-reading* of Gurbani of the SGGS. The vast majority of us can no longer make sense of the vocabulary, concepts and notions contained within Gurbani. The poetic structure, idiomatic language, the juxtaposing method and the unique reinterpretation of pre-1468 spiritual concepts into new meanings are all lost on us.

The small minority of Sikhs who feel the *need* to understand the messages contained within Gurbani have no choice but to rely on *teekas* (translations). But the translations of the SGGS have – by and large – with few exceptions – contributed more towards *misunderstanding* the messages of Gurbani than in helping us decipher them.

Such is primarily on account of our *teekas* making no more than literal translations; the application of *Snatan* (Othodox Indian philosophy) paradigms; and the infiltration (purposive or otherwise) of Vedic slants within the many inaugural translations. Modern day English translations have, with few exceptions, perpetuated this flaw by failing to rectify this foundational defect.

The first translation of the SGGS was undertaken in 1883 by a group of Benares educated *Nirmalas*. The outcome was the *Fareedkoti Teeka* – known after the rulers of Faridkot state who financed the venture. For all intents and purposes, the *Fareedkoti Teeka* succeeded in making the SGGS appear as the fifth Vedas. It did so by a variety of ways but primarily by ignoring the revolutionary reinterpretation of pre-1468 spiritual concepts by the writers of Bani; effectively reverting unique

Sikhi concepts back into Vedic, Puranic and Brahmanical ones.

It did so by disregarding the juxtaposing of Vedic myths within the compositions of the SGGS. The *Fareedkoti Teeka* thus effectively converted the Vedic myths into Gurbani reality. It further did so by giving literal meanings to the spiritual idioms deployed abundantly by the writers of Gurbani while critiquing the clergy of existing spiritualities; effectively erasing the critique while giving credence to the clergies' ways instead.

Gyani Gurmukh Singh of the Singh Sabha Movement – a reform initiative aimed at cleansing Sikhi of *Udasi*, *Nirmala* and Vedic influences – stood in opposition to the *Fareedkoti Teeka*. But he was excommunicated by the Akaal Takhat clergy who had – together with a majority of the clergy – been un-moved by or un-aware of the infusion of Vedic stuff into Sikhi.

For all future attempts in translating the SGGS (including into non-Punjabi languages), the *Fareedkoti Teeka* has regrettably stood in as the standard reference.

The result has been that the Sikh world today stands as one that is *lost in translation*. Lost to the point of having travelled the road back to 1468. Lost to the point of having reached a destination that the spirituality of the SGGS wanted us to avoid. Lost to the point of having walked away – further and further away – from the spirituality of the SGGS.

I have endeavoured (on page 30 of this issue) to illustrate my observations above by attempting to provide an authentic Gurbani based understanding of one *shabd* Aant Kaal ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ – composed by Bhagat Tirlochan ji and contained in Rag Gurji on page 526 of the SGGS. While attempting to do so I have tried to provide the contrasting English translation of Sant Singh Khalsa MD that originates from the Punjabi *Fareedkoti Teeka* as well as the *Sampardayee Teeka* of Sant Kirpal Singh.

Readers can see how, on the one hand – by ignoring the revolutionary reinterpretation of pre-1468 spiritual concepts by the writers of *bani* - the *Fareedkoti* based translations succeed in reverting unique Sikhi concepts back into Vedic, Puranic and Brahmanical ones.

And on the other, how using what I call the *Gurbani Framework* – the use of Gurbani to understand Gurbani – allows us to understand the Shabd authentically.

The difference is stark. For some readers it may be difficult to accept that both translations are of the one and single *Shabd*. For some, our cognitive dissonance may kick in, forcing us to continue accepting as truths, rejected spiritual assertions that have been repeated often enough to appear as Sikhi truths. For others, the *Gurbani Framework* based translation may be liberating. The choice is of course ours and ours alone.

Readers are welcome to comment.

Karminder Singh Dhillon PhD, Co-Editor.

KNOWING GURU NANAK SAHIB JI

Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD (Boston).

Eminent Sikh scholar Bhai Gurdas Ji - a contemporary of Guru Arjun Dev ji, and in whose hand the first copy of Granth Sahib as narrated by the fifth Guru was written - describes the coming of Guru Nanak Paatshah in the following verses:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਯੁੰਧ ਜਗ ਚਾਨਣ
ਰੋਆ॥

*Satgur Nanak Pargetiya Mitee Dhund
Jug Chanan Hoa*

ਜਿਉਂ ਕਰ ਸੁਰਜ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਤਾਰੇ ਛਪੇ ਅੰਧੇਰ
ਪਲੇਆ॥

*Jio Kar Suraj Nikelya, Tarey Chupey
Andher Paloa.*

Bhai ji says the advent of Guru Nanak's spirituality was like the rising of the morning sun whose rays cut through the mist of dawn and lighted the skies, within which brightness, the mighty stars disappeared together with the darkness within which these stars reigned.

In spiritual terms Bhai ji is saying that Guru Nanak's spirituality is one of enlightenment. It is an enlightenment that is as bright as the rising sun. It is an enlightenment that cuts through the mist of the existing (even if much bigger and older) spiritualities of ritual and superstition. It is a spirituality that is meant for the entirety of mankind.

Some 400 years later, one of India's most illuminated minds – Sir Ullama Mohamad Iqbal, PhD (Ludwig, Germany) – the son of a Kashmiri Brahmin who converted to Islam and the author of India's national song Tarana-e-Hind – writes in his Urdu language book *Bang-e-dra* regarding the coming of Guru Nanak, as follows:

*Butkdaa Fir Baad Mudat Sey Roshan Hua
Nuur-e Ibrahim Se Aazar Kaa Ghar
Roshan Hua*

*Once again, after an age, the Temple became
radiant.*

*Once again, the house of God shone with the
glory of God.*

*Shama-e Huq Se Jo Munavar Hai Ye Voh
Mehfil Na Thee*

*Barshey Rehmat Hue Lekin Zamee Kabil
Na Thee.*

*Nanak was the lamp of enlightenment,
but the audience was not one which prized
illumination – it was blind.*

***Nanak brought along the rain of mercy that
poured from the heavens,
but the land was not one which cherished rains –
it was utterly barren.***

*Aaah Budkismat Rahey Awaaze Huq Se Bekhabar
Ghafil Aapney Ful Kee Sheereene Sey Hota Hai
Sazar.*

***Poor wretched people – they never did awaken to
the call of Truth.***

***Just like a mighty tree that is dead to the
awareness of the sweetness of its own fruit.***

Ullama Dr Iqbal's lament is a painful, but accurate depiction of the Sikh psyche in relation to knowing and understanding Guru Nanak. Put plainly: **the Sikh psyche is blind to the enlightenment of Guru Nanak and the Sikh heart is barren to the blessings of Guru Nanak.**

Put even more plainly, the Sikh heart and mind is incapable of appreciating Guru Nanak. Put even more plainly - the coming of Guru Nanak is a waste to the people of India. Dr Iqbal captures this waste in the following verse:

*Hind Ko Lekin Khyalee Falsafey Pur Naaz Thaa.
But the people of India were content to hold on,
with (false) pride to their empty and imaginary
spiritualties.*

**Powerful words. Equally powerful a slap to the
spiritual face of Sikhs of Guru Nanak. Powerful
but true. Necessary even.**

For how much does the average Sikh know about Guru Nanak? Much of what we know is narrated through some 2,000 odd stories that we euphemistically call *Sakhis*, and are repeated by our clergy - parcharaks, preachers, *kirtanias*, *dhadees* as well as our writers and historians

The source of these so called *sakhis* is NOT the writings of Guru Nanak.

The origin of these *sakhis* are a variety of books called *Janam Sakhis* – the oldest being composed

in 1733 by Dya Raam (writer) and illustrated with pictures by Alam Chand Raj (painter / artist). This *Janam Sakhi* – also called the B40 *Janam Sakhi*, (after its Accession Number assigned by the India Office Library in London) is thus written 264 years AFTER Guru Nanak's advent.

The most popular *Janam Sakhi* amongst Sikhs is Bhai Bala's *Janam Sakhi* – purportedly written by Guru Nanak's Hindu companion Bala. Bhai Bala is a fictitious character. He did not exist. Guru Nanak's companion was Mardana. How many Sikhs know of this basic untruth – that their entire story of Guru Nanak is written by a non-existent character?

**Viewed collectively, these *Janam Sakhis* paint
Guru Nanak as:**

**a mystic,
a miracle performer,
a faith healer,
a magician,
a purveyor of superstitious beliefs,
a practitioner of super-natural powers,
a recluse,
an ascetic,
an unproductive child,
a neglecting father,
demanding blind faith
and so much more.**

**Snakes come over to shade him as he slept
while his cows ate the fields of others.
His father slaps him for wasting his hard-
earned money.**

**In the wink of an eye he brings back to life
fields eaten by his cows.**

**Elsewhere he drowns in a river and comes back
to life three days later.**

**He brings dead people back to life, and stops a
mountain of a stone hurled at him with his
palm, depression engraved in stone.**

**He flies over the mountains to meet Yogis and
Sidhs residing there.**

**He orders his son to hang out clothes to dry in
the middle of the night**

and tells his disciple Bhai Lehna to eat a corpse.**This is the Guru Nanak that Sikhs seem to know. The non-existent one, of course.**

This is perhaps what Dr Iqbal meant when he said “*Hind Ke Lekin Khyalee Falsafey Pur Naaz Thaa*”. We wanted to stick to our “*khayalee*” beliefs and reject Guru Nanak’s real, practical and absolute enlightenment. To make our *khyalee* beliefs acceptable, we wanted to paint and portray Guru Nanak himself to be a practitioner and purveyor of our wrong beliefs.

So instead of wanting to stand in the divine enlightenment that was Guru Nanak, we pulled the Guru into the shadows of our own “*khyalee*” darkness. For this is exactly what the authors of much of 2,000 sakhis have succeeded in doing.

At its most basic level, the *Janam Sakhis* changed Guru Nanak’s birth date from Vesakh 1469 to Kathik 1469. In accordance with the Vedic believers who were complicit in changing the date, Vesakh is the month of celebration fit for events belonging to the upper Brahmin classes, while Kathik is the month fit for the celebration of the lesser castes. In the minds of the *Janam Sakhi* writers, Guru Nanak’s *parkash* could not be allowed to sit in Vesakh because he was not a Brahmin. They falsely determined Kathik Dee Puranmashi as the specific day for Guru Nanak’s birthday. In accordance to Vedic beliefs of auspiciousness – this day is the MOST inauspicious.

Sikhs have no such beliefs about auspiciousness or otherwise of man-made constructs, but Sikhs ought to object to the distortion, and REVERT to the reality.

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru knew of Guru Nanak’s birth in Vesakh, which is why he too chose Vesakh 1699 to create the Khalsa. It was supposed

to be one complete circle. It was supposed to stamp the completion of Guru Nanak’s Sikhi. When Sikhs celebrate Vesakhi – they would celebrate BOTH – the birth of their FOUNDER Guru Nanak and their OWN birth as Khalsas. Sikhs obviously did so, until the Sakhi writers infiltrated into the Sikh psyche almost in total and changed Guru Nanak’s birth date to Kathik.

Guru Nanak wrote a great deal of baneer – all of which is contained within the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Nine hundred and forty-seven shabads and saloks of his are contained in the Guru Granth Sahib. How many of these shabads have Sikhs read? How many have we understood? How many have we shared with the rest of humanity – for whom Guru Nanak’s spirituality was intended. How many do our ragis, -parcharaks, dadhees and kirtanias preach – without resorting to some half-cooked sakhi to distort its meaning? How many have we attempted to apply his baneer in our lives? These 947 shabads are the real Guru Nanak. These 947 shabads are the divine enlightenment of Guru Nanak and the Godly rain of blessings that he brought.

Will we continue to be blind and barren so as to ignore these 947 shabads that tell us of the real Guru Nanak and instead link with what are mostly half baked, half cooked, patently false, semi-false stories called *sakhis* that are plagiarized/stolen from others – especially from the bigger stars (*Tarey Chupey*) that Bhai Gurdas ji is talking about?

Let us just take one verse of Guru Nanak:
 ਕੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ੧ ॥
Hukum Rajayee Chalna, Nanak Likhiya Naal.

It is on page 1 of the Guru Granth Sahib. It captures the essence of Guru Nanak’s enlightenment for all of humanity – *Hukam*. Guru Nanak’s Sikhi is about *Hukam* – about attempting to know and understand the Will of the Creator; about wanting to abide by (*chalna*) and live one’s life within the confines of this will; about wanting to be part and parcel of this will (*likhiya naal*), and about making the will of the

Creator as the object of our spiritual life (*rajayee*).

Should one apply the message of just this one SINGLE verse of Guru Nanak, 90 percent of the *sakhis* of the *Janam Sakhis* would crumble because they show Guru Nanak going against the Will of the Creator. How can a Guru tell us Sikhs to know, understand, and abide by the *Hukam* of the Creator, while he himself destructed the *Hukam* at every step of the way, in every *sakhi*?

If we had read the Banee of Guru Nanak, we would know that his companion is Mardana who is placed in the SGGS by Guru Nanak at three places. We would know that Bala did not exist because in the 947 shabads (and 40 Vaars of Bhai Gurdas ji), Bala is not mentioned even once.

We Sikhs need to cure the blindness that Islamic luminary Dr Iqbal is pointing out for us. The cure is within the enlightenment of Guru Nanak's 947 shabads and the rest of Gurbani. We also need to transform our barren hearts and souls so that we can contain the blessing that Guru Nanak brought for us. The way to irrigate these barren hearts and souls is again to connect with the messages of *Gurbanee*.

The year 2019 will celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak our Guru. One can almost hear the soul of the Guru cry out from the pages of the GGS:

Enough of darkness and baren-ness; come to the enlightenment that Guru Nanak is:

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਏ ॥
ੴ ॥ SGGS 67.

*Gurbanee Es Jug Mein Chanan, Karam Vasei
Mun Aiye.*

Gurbani is the enlightenment (*Chanan*) within which the divine blessings (*Karam*) will fill the heart of the enlightened. End.

*The author can be contacted at
dhillon99@gmail.com.*

NANAK (1469-1536)

India's Renaissance Reformer That World Never Heard Of

[Editorial from May-June 2015 Sikh Bulletin]

Guru Nanak was a child prodigy, showing early maturity when questioning his teacher on meaning of life and his priest on meaning of *Janeu*. A born linguist, he mastered Sanskrit and Arabic, two languages in which the Hindu and Islamic literature was written, the literature that he read in depth, and Persian which was the official language of his time, at a very young age. He communicated in the countries he visited in their language, wore their clothes and ate their food.

To spread his message, he travelled the length and breadth of the Indian-subcontinent to Nepal and Tibet in the north to borders of Burma in the East, Ceylon in the south and Mecca, Medina and the neighbouring countries in the Middle East to the west. Within India he travelled extensively to meet and have discourse with Indian scholars of various faiths. He travelled to Mecca by sea with the Muslim pilgrims on Haj and returned to Panjab overland via Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, along the well-travelled military and trade routes.

Not much is known about the details of his travels in the Arab world but reason and Guru Nanak's innate curiosity and search for knowledge dictates that his travels in the realm of the **Ottoman Empire**, which was at its peak in the 16th century when Guru Nanak visited the Middle East, would have been a must and travel within it would have been safer than it is today. Ottoman Empire was a powerful multinational, multilingual empire controlling much of [Southeast Europe](#), [Western Asia](#), the [Caucasus](#), [North Africa](#), and the [Horn of Africa](#).

It is more than likely that he must have, in addition to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, that is commonly referred to about his Middle East travels, visited, Konya, Turkey. Konya was a Centre of learning for Sufi Islam established by the followers of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi, himself a transplant from present day Afghanistan of Persian parents. [Rumi, Poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, also known as Jalāl ad- Dīn Muhammad Balkhī, Mawlānā/Mevlānā, Mevlevī/Mawlawī, and more popularly simply as Rumi, was a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufī mystic. [Wikipedia](#). *Born:* September 30, 1207, [Vakhsh, Tajikistan](#); *Died:* December 17, 1273, [Konya, Turkey](#); *Buried:* [Mevlana Museum, Konya, Turkey](#)]

[Rumi and Guru Nanak's portraits and the inscription of Commencing Verse of Aad Guru Granth Sahib in an ancient Zoroastrian Temple in Baku, Azerbaijan are published with permission from Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal from his book "Nankian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity".]

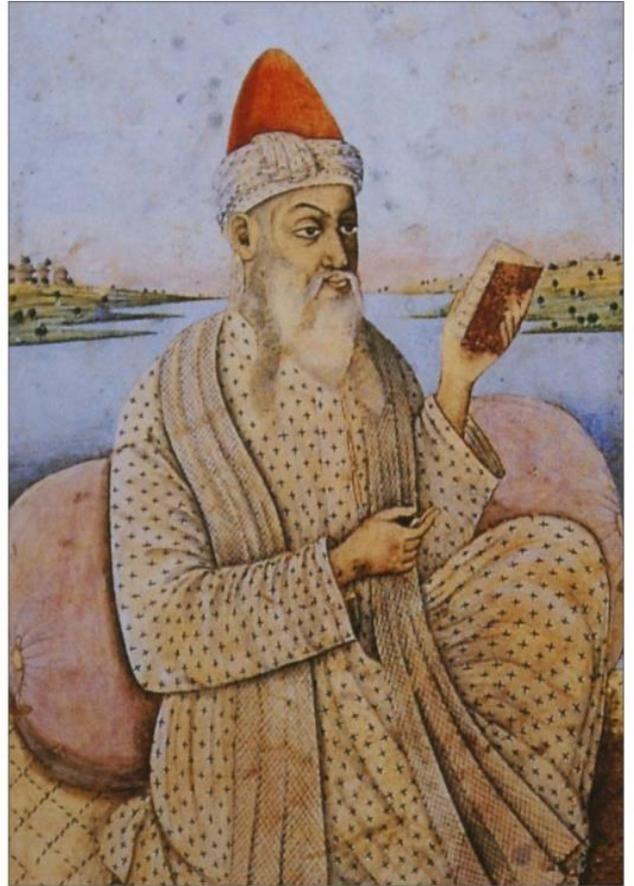


Fig. 2-3. Guru Nanak with a turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out. The turban style is very similar to that of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey (Fig.2-4). Guru Nanak is shown holding a notebook in which he used to write his Bani. The most prominent feature to be noted is that there is no *tilak* (frontal mark), no rosary (*mala*) in his hand or around his neck or around his turban. (Reproduced with permission from Rooli Books from *The Sikhs* by Khushwant Singh and Raghu Rai)

Sufis consider themselves to be the original true proponents of this pure original form of Islam. Guru Nanak was drawn to Islamic scholars of Sufi Islam than the Islam practiced in India by the rulers of his time. During his studies of Islamic literature, it stands to reason that Guru Nanak had access to Rumi's writings and must have engaged in discussions with Sufi scholars in India.

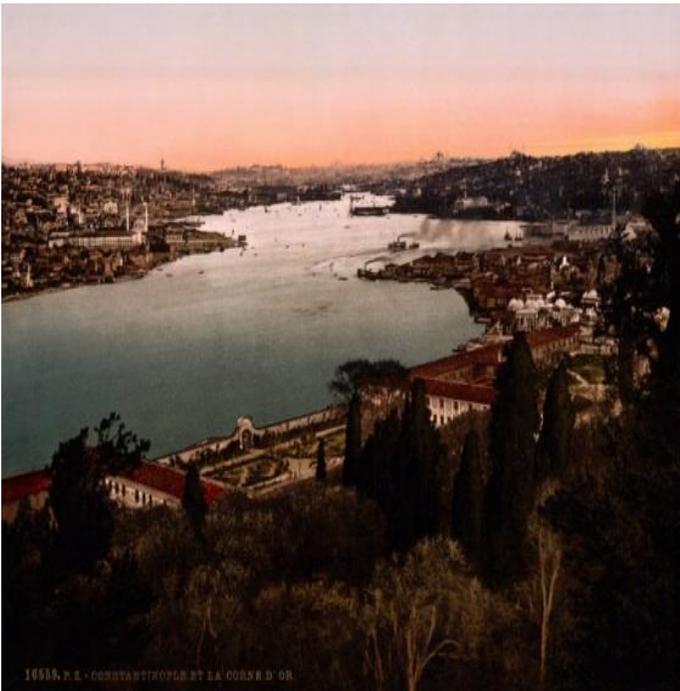
Guru Nanak must have found Rumi's philosophy to his liking:



Fig. 2-4. Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey with turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out.

*“I’m not from the East or the west.
I’m not Christian or Jew or Muslim.
I’m not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.
I do not belong to any established religion or any
cultural system.
I/m neither body nor soul, for I belong to the
Soul of my Beloved.”*

If Guru Nanak did travel to Konya, his travels would surely have taken him to Jerusalem, place sacred to the three Semitic religions and on to Istanbul and may be Baku, Azerbaijan. Background for Guru Nanak’s portrait below is intriguingly similar to views of Straits of Bosphorus in Istanbul today. With today’s research this is the closest we come to placing Guru Nanak in Istanbul, Turkey.



Straits of Bosphorus, Istanbul, separating Asia from Europe

A narrative to his visits to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad has been found in *“Babania Kahania”* by **Inderjit Singh Jhaji**, given to me by Dr. Harbans Lal:

*“During Guru Nanak’s journeys in the Middle East, a local author, **Taajudin Naqshabandhi**, joined Guru Nanak and remained with him for*

*roughly one-and-a-half to two years. Taajudin documented his time with Guru Nanak in great detail. Four centuries later, a young man from Kashmir, **Syed Mushtaq Hussain**, chanced upon Taajudin’s handwritten manuscript while studying to become an Islamic scholar. This manuscript changed Mushtaq’s life. He converted to Sikhism and went on to become the renowned **Sant Syed Prithipal Singh**.*

*In the absence of any facility available for copying the book in facsimile, Mushtaq Hussain took notes from Taajudin’s manuscript. He also took notes from another book, **Twarikh-e-Arab**, written by **Khwaja Jainul Abdin**, a Muslim author who also accompanied Guru Nanak during his travels to Mecca. Mushtaq’s notes later formed the basis of the Punjabi book, **Babe Nanak di Baghdad Pheri**.”*

Inderjit Singh Jhaji, December 26, 2012

Another intriguing look into Guru Nanak’s travels to the Middle East comes from *“My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan, Baku”* by Ervad Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B. A., Ph. D. C. I. E. (1854-1933).

What you see below is the **Commencing Verse** of the Adi Granth, courtesy Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal. It is inscribed in stone above a doorway of a temple that originally was a prominent centre of Zoroastrianism in Baku, Azerbaijan, that fell into disrepair after onset of Islam. Long ago, traders from India managed to get permission to convert a small portion of this complex of Zoroastrian Temples as their place of worship.

I first saw it in Dr. Chahal’s magazine and then on web under “My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan. Baku” by Ervad Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B. A., Ph. D. C. I. E. (1854-1933). He had gone on a pilgrimage to the places associated with his Zoroastrian ancestors.



Fig. 2-2. The inscription of 'Commencing Verse' of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (commonly called as 'Mool Mantra' by many Sikhs) found on a wall in a temple in Baku, Azerbaijan. Reproduced with permission from Dr Joseph H. Peterson's
 Web site: <http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>
 (Modi, Jivanji Jamshedji. 1924. My Travels outside Bombay, Iran, Azerbaijan, Baku.
<http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>)

My latest exposure to reference to this inscription came in 2014 when I read, *“A Journey from Bengal to England, through The Northern Part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, And Persia, And into Russia, by the Caspian-Sea”* By George Forster. In the Civil Service of The Honourable The East India Company. Printed for R. Faulder, New Bond-Street, London, 1798. (Original Edition).

George Forester had left Bengal for this overland Journey from Calcutta on March 23, 1782 arriving in London on March 31, 1784. Quite a feat! On March 27, 1784 he visited this temple complex in Baku, saw these inscriptions both in Gurmukhi and Devnagri script and met a group of aging ‘Moulton Hindu Traders’ who told him that they were the last ones because their children are not interested in following in their footsteps.

Now this is something worth researching by a Sikh scholar. **Did Guru Nanak visit Konya and Istanbul in Turkey and perhaps Baku in Azerbaijan where he ran into Traders from Multan from his backyard in Panjab?**

After all these carvings were there in 1784 only two and a half centuries after Guru Nanak and trade between India and that part of the world

had gone on for centuries. In fact, it is highly likely where the ancestors of many Panjabi’s came from. My last name is Shergill, two Persian words, sher+gill put together, and meaning the same as in today’s Panjabi. And, to boot, there is still a province of northern Iran along the south shore of the Caspian see called, ‘Gilan’, **land of Gilanis/Gils/Gills/Shergills/McGills/Cowgills/Sc argills, Gilberts, Gilroys etc.**

It is time for us to bring the teachings of Guru Nanak to the notice of the outside world. Best way to do that is through the medium of English first and then translation from English into other languages. **What I think we need to concentrate on is to take advantage of the electronic media and use the pages of The Sikh Bulletin to coordinate the translation of the Bani of Guru Nanak into English.** For sure there are several versions of it already but none of them do justice to what the Guru is saying.

I ask the readers of The Sikh Bulletin in the Diaspora to create a *dharamsal* in their own homes, become *missionaries* for Guru Nanak and let their computer be the channel of communication and Social Media the *Courier Pigeon*.

Email to me one hymn of Guru Nanak and its English translation that you think is worthy of being brought to the notice of the population in the countries of our residences. We will invite our readers’ opinions, arrive at a consensus and then make it available for everyone to use.

Guru Nanak was One of a Kind, just as his concept of Kartar/Creator was One and Only. The world had never produced anyone like him before nor since. His philosophy is unique and is applicable in all countries and cultures at all times.

He possessed a brilliant mind. He was a **Deist** two centuries before European intellectuals coined the term. **Deism rejected revelation and authority** as a source of religious knowledge with the conclusion

that reason and observation of the natural world are sufficient to determine the existence of a single creator of the universe. Deism gained prominence among intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment, especially in Britain, France, Germany and the United States, who, raised as Christians, believed in one god but became disenchanted with organized religion and notions such as the Trinity, Biblical inerrancy and the supernatural interpretation of events such as miracles. Included in those influenced by its ideas were leaders of the American and French Revolutions.

Guru Nanak threw away centuries old *maryada of the faith of his birth*. At a very young age he refused to wear the *janeu*; discarded the *caste system*; preached against *idol worship*; recognised the *equality of mankind*; asserted the *equality of men and women*; opposed the practice of '*sati*' (self-immolation by widows upon their husbands' death, still prevalent in Hindu society), rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life *salvation*, *tapasya*, *heaven* and *hell*, *incarnation*, *transmigration*, *84 lakh juni*, *yatra* to holy places, *fasting*, *multiple gods* and *goddesses*, and of course, unique only to Sikhism, wished '*sarbat da bhala*'. He gave us nothing like Ten Commandments or Sharia Law. Instead the Guru simply says '*do not commit an act that you will later regret and do not eat or drink that is unhealthy for your body and mind*'. He wanted mankind to use '*bibek budhi*', the only species that has it.

In this special issue some hymns have **English translation by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal** from one of his articles and English translation of **all the hymns quoted by Dr. Baldev Singh in his manuscript** that we are planning on publishing this year.

[This book has now been published and is also available free in electronic format at our website: www.sikhbulletin.com. Printed copies are available for \$5.00 US and Canada plus postage.]

Some Contemporaries of Guru Nanak and some who came later but developed their theories similar to Guru Nanak's on the basis of their own '*bibek budhi*':

Guru Nanak (1469-1539):

Nicolaus Copernicus, Poland, (1473-1543). They shared the modern concept of Cosmos.

Martin Luther, Germany (1483-1546). Guru, had he met him, would have advised him against attempting reformation of Christianity because a religion can never be reformed.

Vasco da Gama, Portugal (1460-1524).

Michelangelo, Italy (1475-1564).

Henry VIII, England (1491-1547).

Babur, Uzbekistan (1483-1530). Started Mogul dynasty in India.

Galileo, Italy (1564-1642) believer in Copernicus cosmic view; spent last nine years of his life under house arrest by the Pope for contradicting Bible which claims Earth as the center of the Universe.

Environmentalism (2015) What a refreshing change from the Vatican, in Galileo's time and now. Pope Francis Encyclical on climate change (2015) is very refreshing and completely opposite to his predecessors' actions. It took the world 500 years to catch up with Guru Nanak, and yet not all the world.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published his '*On the Origin of Species by means of natural Selection*, in 1859, 300 years after Guru Nanak had expressed it in his hymns.

Alfred Wagner (1880-1930), Germany hypothesized in 1912 that the continents are slowly drifting around the Earth. He too had used his *bibek budhi*, as Guru Nanak did, by observing the coast lines of world's oceans and got laughed at because he could not explain the mechanism. Answers came half a century later with advancement in science.

Hardev Singh Shergill
editor@sikhbulletin.com
www.sikhbulletin.com

WHERE DOES SIKHI STAND 550 YEARS AFTER GURU NANAK?

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD
Institute for Understanding Sikhism
Laval, Québec, H7W 5L9
Email: sikhism@iuscanada.com

ABSTRACT

This article briefly discusses what Sikhi is, who is a Sikh, and how Sikhi became a ritualistic religion. It also discusses that 'Sabd Guru' became 'Granth Guru' with the passing of time. Interpolating and misconstruing the logo, ੴ, Khanda, ੴ, and some phrases of Guru Nanak are also discussed. It exposes that many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars have failed to understand Sikhi in its real perspective, indicating Sikhi has lost its originality. Thereafter, causes of misinterpretation of bani and misrepresentation of Sikhi are discussed. Some Sikhs have forgotten to give credit for preserving the Earth and Environment to Guru Nanak. Finally, there are some suggestions to Sikh scholars to present Sikhi in its real perspective during the celebration of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak in the year 2019. The Institute for Understanding Sikhism is also holding an International Conference to find out if the real Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak about 550 years ago could be re-discovered in its real perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Sikhi (Sikhism), founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539), is considered a modern religion. The total population of its followers, "Sikhs", is about 27 million worldwide. They make up 0.39 percent of the world population; approximately 83 percent (22,815,730) live in India. About 76 percent of all Sikhs live in the north Indian state of Punjab, where they form a majority of the population. [1]

Although Sikhi is claimed by the Sikhs as a modern religion in the world, it is continuously misrepresented under the influence of Vedanta and ancient philosophy.

Guru Nanak is usually described as a mystic who had a mystical experience at the age of 29 when he came out of the Vayein rivulet after being missing for three days. Emerging from the water, he proclaimed, ***"There is no Hindu; there is no Muslim."*** Chahal et al [2] have refuted such stories in the book, *Nanak: The Guru – Founder of Sikhism*. In this book, they emphasize that Guru Nanak was a very keen observer of Cosmology, Nature and human behavior; and he started to formulate his philosophy from an early age. **They also recommend that those who want to know about Nanak and his philosophy should look for it in his bani (hymns/verses/words).**

Today, Sikhi has become an esoteric, miraculous, mystic, and ritualistic religion because of the misrepresentation of Guru Nanak and his philosophy embodied in his bani. In spite of this, Sikhs have shown their ability and capability to be a vibrant community, contributing towards the uplifting of the economy of India and the foreign countries they have adopted. They are teachers in colleges and universities, scientists in various research organizations, and participate in politics at the state, provincial and municipal level. Additionally, there are many Sikhs who are multi-millionaires and have established successful businesses. They also participate at various positions in the army and police of India, Canada, Malaysia, the U.K., and U.S.A.

Sikhs are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend their rights and identity as well as millions of dollars to build magnificent gurdwaras. In the same way, **a lot of money is spent to hold Akhand Paths (non-stop reading of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib - AGGS)**. In many gurdwaras, as many as 10 to 300 Akhand Paths are performed under one roof while nobody is listening (Fig.1). [3] **Delicious langar (free food) is served in**

gurdwaras to feed people who are already well fed. Langar is also distributed to people in need around the world. On the other hand, **very little money is spent to educate both Sikhs and non-Sikhs about Sikhi.**

WHAT IS SIKHI?

The following discussion on Guru Nanak's concept of Sikhi is based on the studies done by Chahal [4] and Chahal, et.al. [2]:

The word, **Sikhi**, has been defined in one phrase by Guru Nanak as follows:

ਸਿਖੀ¹ ਸਿਖਿਆ² ਗੁਰ³ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ⁴ ॥

Sikhī sikhīā gur vīchār.

ਅਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 465.

Sikhi¹ is the teachings² which are based on the enlightening³ philosophy⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 465. [5]

ਸਿਖਿਆ² (*sikhīā*): Teachings: something that is taught, e.g. Doctrine.

ਗੁਰ³ (*gur*): A form of **ਗੁਰੂ** (*guru*). According to Bhai Kahn Singh [6], the word 'Guru' originated from 'Gri', meaning to engulf and to enlighten, i.e., the one that engulfs the darkness (ignorance) and enlightens (makes to understand). According to him, 'Guru' in Gurbani is spelled as: **ਗੁਰ**, **ਗੁਰੁ**, **ਗੁਰੂ** (*gur*, *gur*, *guru*). In addition to these spellings, it is also spelled as **ਗਰਿ** (*gur*). In spite of the different spellings, all of these forms are pronounced as 'Guru' and means as explained above. Therefore, it means enlightening, enlightener, or enlightening philosophy which removes ignorance.

ਵੀਚਾਰਿ⁴ (*vichar*):

“*Philosophy* (from Greek φιλοσοφία, *philosophia*, literally "love of wisdom", is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. The term was probably coined

by Pythagoras (c.570–495 BCE). Philosophical methods include questioning, critical discussion, rational argument, and systematic presentation.”

[7]

This phrase confirms that Sikhi means ‘philosophy’. And ‘philosophy’ is defined as:

“*The rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct.*”

(dictionary.com). **This is what Guru Nanak did.**

The irony is the word “philosophy” has never been applied by the Sikh intelligentsia in relation of Sikhi to humanity. So much so that even my use of the word philosophy and the use of questioning and reasoning to understand gurbani by Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon in his talk delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Global Sikh Council held in Dubai on March 16-19, 2018 was criticized by some. **In general, the application of logic, reason, and the scientific method are not allowed by the self-declared custodians of Sikhi in teaching and preaching Sikhi.**

The word **Sikhi** is further explained by Guru Nanak as follows:

ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ² ਨਦੀ³ ਸਭਿ⁴ ਸਿਖੀ⁵

ਨਾਤੈ⁶ ਜਿਤੁ⁷ ਵਡਿਆਈ⁸ ॥

Gurū samundḡ naḡī sabḡ sikhī nāḡai jīḡ vadiāī.

ਅਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 150.

The Guru¹ is like an ocean², in which rivers³ of whole⁴ philosophy⁵ fall in; bathing⁶ in such rivers means practicing Sikhi

(enlightenment/enlightening philosophy), glorious greatness⁸ is achieved⁷.

AGGS, M 1, p 150.

ਗੁਰੂ¹ (*gurū*) here means ‘enlightenment’. For example, in the West, the ‘Age of Enlightenment’ was a philosophical movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that promoted science and reason over myth and superstition. [8]

ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ² (*The Guru¹ is like an ocean²*) means ‘the ocean of wisdom’ in which all rives of enlightening philosophies fall in.

ਨਦੀ³ (*nadi*) branch of philosophy which covers matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language

What does Guru mean in Gurbani?

The word, ਗੁਰੂ (*gurū*) has been used to convey various meanings depending upon the context in which it has been used in gurbani. In general, ਗੁਰੂ (*gurū*) means enlightener, enlightening, or enlightenment as explained above. Bhai Kahn Singh in *Gurmat Martand* explains 'Guru' as follows [9]:

One that dispels ignorance and teaches the truth, affection, interest, and benefit (human rights). According to him, Nanak is the Guru sent by God to dispel ignorance and preach truth and human rights.

On the other hand, in Hinduism everybody is supposed to have a personal guru. Some Hindu families have their own family guru. Under these traditions, a question came up in the minds of Siddhas: if Nanak is a Guru, then who was his Guru? Therefore, during a discourse with Siddhas, the Siddhas questioned the young Nanak:

Who is your Guru?

ਕਵਣ ਮੂਲੁ¹ ਕਵਣ ਮਿਤ² ਵੇਲਾ³ ॥

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ⁴ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂਚੇਲਾ⁵ ॥

Kavaṅ mūl kavaṅ maṭ velā.

Ferā kavaṅ gurū jis kā tū chelā.

ਅਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 943.

What is the source of beginning¹ and which type of philosophy² is of this Age³?

Who is that 'guru'⁴ of whom you are a disciple⁵?

AGGS, M 1, p 943.

Guru Nanak answered that his 'guru' is 'sabd' as follows:

ਪਵਨ¹ ਅਰੰਭੁ² ਸਿਤ³ ਗੁਰ⁴ ਮਿਤ⁵ ਵੇਲਾ⁶ ॥

ਸਬਦੁ⁷ ਗੁਰੂ⁸ ਸੁਰਿਤ⁹ ਧੁਨਿ¹⁰ ਚੇਲਾ¹¹ ॥

Pavan arambh satgur maṭ velā.

Sabaḍ gurū suraṭ dhun chelā.

The air¹ is the beginning² of every life, and this is the age⁶ of enlightenment⁵ through the True³ Guru⁴.

Note: It appears that Guru Nanak started the *Age of Enlightenment during 15th century*. It became dominant during the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. [8]

Who is the true guru?

It has been explained in the second sentence:

The sabd⁷ is the guru⁸ (enlightener), and my keen¹⁰ conscience⁹ is its disciple¹¹.

The next question is:

What is the 'Sabd' which is the 'Guru' of Nanak? Guru Nanak has described 'sabd' as the 'guru' in stanza #38 of JAP bani as follows:

ਜਤੁ¹ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ² ਧੀਰਜੁ³ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ⁴ ॥

ਅਹਰਿਣ⁵ ਮਿਤ⁶ ਵੇਦੁ⁷ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ⁸ ॥

Jaṭ pāhārā dhīraj suniār.

Ahraṇ maṭ ved hāthiār.

Self-control¹ should be the furnace² and patience³ of the goldsmith⁴.

Wisdom⁶ should be the anvil⁵, and knowledge⁷ should be the tool⁸.

ਭਉ⁹ ਖਲਾ¹⁰ ਅਗਿਨ¹¹ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥

ਭਾਂਡਾ¹² ਭਾਉ¹³ ਅੰਮਿਤੁ¹⁴ ਤਿਤੁ¹⁵ ਢਾਲਿ¹⁶ ॥

ਘੜੀਐ¹⁷ ਸਬਦੁ¹⁸ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ¹⁹ ॥

Bhāo khālā agan tap tāo.

Bhāṅdā bhāo amrit tit dhāl.

Ghāṛīai sabaḍ sachī taksāl.

Love⁹ for the Eternal Entity (God) should be the bellows¹⁰ to blow air into fire¹¹ to make it super-hot.

The body (mind), full of love¹³, is the melting pot¹² where the above-mentioned self-control, patience, wisdom, and knowledge as matter¹⁵ are melted¹⁶ together to coin¹⁷ the sabd (idea/philosophy)¹⁸ as an Amrit (elixir)¹⁴ in the mint¹⁹ of truth.

ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਿਰ²⁰ ਕਰਮੁ²¹ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ²² ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ²³ ਨਦਿਰ²⁴ ਨਿਹਾਲ²⁵ ॥੩੮॥

Jin kao naḍar karam ṭin kār.

Nānak naḍrī naḍar nihāl. ||38||

Such type of work²² to coin sabd (idea/philosophy) can only be done by those who have the capability²¹ of vision²⁰.

The Eternal Entity (God) is happy²⁵ for such people who have this type of vision^{23, 24}. 38.

AGGS, Jap # 38, p 8.

Chahal [4] says that stanza # 38 of JAP bani clearly indicates that the **word “sabd” means the idea or philosophy which enlightens a person to discover the right path of life.** Therefore, “sabd” is interpreted as “enlightening idea/philosophy”.

Guru Nanak declared that ‘sabd’ is his ‘guru’; therefore, it should also be everyone’s ‘guru’. Nevertheless, Guru Ramdas declared ‘bani’ is ‘guru’ and vice versa:

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਰੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ

ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੫॥

Baṇī gurū gurū hai baṇī vich baṇī amṛiṭ sāre.

Gur baṇī kahai sevak jan mānai partakh gurū nistāre. ||5||

ਅਗਸਤ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 982.

Bani is Guru and Guru is bani, and in this bani is the elixir of life.

Guru says bani, and the followers (Sikhs) accept it; thus, the Guru will help the follower across the sea of life.

AGGS, M 4, p 982.

Note: ਸੇਵਕੁ (*sevak*) here means ‘follower’ but elsewhere means ‘Sikh’. Almost every theologian interprets ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ (Baṇī gurū gurū hai baṇī) as “*The bani is the guru and the guru is the bani*” but does so without defining ‘bani’ and ‘guru’. Scholars are also silent about “who is the

‘guru’ who says ‘bani’ (ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਰੈ - Gur baṇī kahai).” It was Guru Ramdas again, who very clearly identified that it is Nanak who says ‘bani’:

ਜਨੁ¹ ਨਾਨਕੁ² ਬੋਲੇ ਗੁਣ³ ਬਾਣੀ⁴ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ⁵ ਹਿਰ⁶ ਨਾਮਿ⁷

ਸਮਾਇਆ⁸ ॥੪॥੫॥

Jan Nānak bole guṇ baṇī gurbāṇī har nām samāiā. ||4||5||

AGGS, M 4, p 494.

Nanak², the person¹, speaks bani⁴ of distinctive wisdom³; this is the enlightening bani⁵ which is based⁸ on the Laws of Nature/Universe⁷ of the Eternal Entity (God)⁶.

Note: ਬਾਣੀ⁴ (bani): Words, utterance.

According to the above phrases of Guru Ramdas, ‘ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ’ (gurbani) means the utterance of Guru Nanak. On the other hand, Bhai Kahn Singh [9] says that besides the bani of Guru Nanak, all other bani of Sikh Gurus who succeeded the ‘House of Nanak’ are also called ‘gurbani’. Bhai Gurdas still goes further to say that all bani (including of Bhagats and Bhattas) in the AGGS is ‘gurbani’ (a note under ‘gurbani’ by Bhai Kahn Singh). It appears that there is no unanimity in understanding the word ‘ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ’ (gurbani). The word, gurbani, was for bani of Guru Nanak according to Guru Ramdas, it became Gurbani for the bani of all Gurus according to Bhai Kahn Singh, thereafter, it became gurbani for the bani of all Gurus, Bhagats, Bhattas and the Sikhs whose bani is included in the AGGS according to Bhai Gurdas. This is a very good example how the original concept of gurbani changed with the time after Guru Nanak.

The most important phrase of the fifth Guru, Arjun, is quoted here, which clearly confirms that Nanak is the Guru and his philosophy (Sikhi) is in his bani:

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਨ ਸੁਣਿਆ¹ ਪੇਖਿਆ²

ਸੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਰਭਾਸਿ³ ਨ ਪਰਿਆ ਰੇ ॥

Gur Nānak jin suniā pekhiā
se fir garbhās na pariā re.
ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ 5, ਪੰਨਾ 612.

*Those who have heard¹ and analyzed² the
philosophy of Guru Nanak do not fall into
ignorance³ again.
AGGS, M 5, p 612.*

Bhai Kahn Singh's Mahan Kosh:

ਪੇਖਨਾ: ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ, ਨਿਹਾਰਨਾ, “ਪੇਖਿਓ ਲਾਲਨ ਪਾਟ ਬੀਚਿ
ਖੇਏ”. ਵਿਚਾਰਣਾ, ਸੋਚਣਾ, “ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿਮਿਰ੍ਹਤੀ ਪੇਖੈ ਸਰਬ
ਢੰਢੋਲਿ” (ਸੁਖਮਨੀ), ਤਮਾਸਾ, ਖਲ “ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਜਗ
ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ” ਮ: 9, ਨਜਾਰਾ, ਦਿਰਸਯ | (*Pekhna*: Means
to evaluate, show, game, scene)

ਪੇਖਿ: ਦੇਖਕੇ, ਪੇਰਕਣ ਕਰਕੇ, “ਪੇਖਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ
ਬਿਗਸੇ” | (*Pekh*: To evaluate. To see)

Therefore, ਪੇਖਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਪੇਖਿ / ਪੇਖਿਆ (*Pekhana jan
pekh/pekhia*) whether ‘*Khakha*’ is with or without
siari (accent on letter as ਖਿ), it means “to see’ as
well as ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ (*prerana*) to evaluate and ਸੋਚਣਾ
(*sochana*) to think. In the above phrase, ਪੇਖਿਆ
(*pekhia*) means ‘evaluated’, ‘understood’.

And ਗਰਭਾਸਿ (*garbas*) has been used
metaphorically as ‘ignorance’, since when the
developing embryo is in the womb, it is ignorant
about the outside world. Its only link is with the
mother, who supplies all the necessary nutrition
through her blood for its growth.

Moreover, Guru Arjun explains that Nanak is also
Sat Guru and perfect way of life is his Sikhi in
the following phrase:

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿ¹ ਗੁਰਿ² ਭੇਟਿਐ³

ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ⁴ ॥

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ⁵ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ⁶

ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ⁷ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ⁸

ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ⁹ ॥੨॥

Nānak satgur bhēti¹ ai pūrī hovai jugat.
Hasandi² ā khelandi³ ā painandi⁴ ā khāvandi⁵ ā viche
hovai mukat. ॥2॥

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 522.

Guru Arjun advises that:

*Those who have accepted³ Nanak as their true¹
Guru² (true enlightener) find the perfect way of life⁴
(Sikhi).*

That is:

*One can get salvation⁹ by following the philosophy
(Sikhi) of Guru Nanak while laughing⁵ (being
happy), playing⁶ (right games), dressing⁷ (proper
dress – but not deceptive one) and eating⁸
(properly). AGGS, M 5, p 522.*

**I hope that the above discussion clearly explains
“ਸਿਖੀ” (Sikhi) is a ‘philosophy’ as well as “ਸਬਦੁ”**

(sabd) is ‘guru’. However, Guru Ramdas and
Guru Arjun have declared Nanak as ‘guru’. It is
also evident that the Sikhi (Philosophy) of Guru
Nanak is embodied in his bani (words), which is
based upon his ਸਬਦੁ (sabd), which in turn has
been coined through self-control, patience,
wisdom and knowledge. It is evident that Nanak
is the Guru and his bani is ‘Sikhi’ as accepted by
Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjun. Consequently, I
have assigned an academic term, “Nanakian
Philosophy” to the philosophy of Guru Nanak.
[\[10\]](#)

With the passing of time, the ‘Sabd Guru’
steadily lost its value in Sikhi. The ‘Sabd’ of
Guru Nanak was named as ‘Bani’ by Guru
Ramdas after 1574, then bani of Guru Nanak
and other Gurus became ‘Gurbani’. Thereafter,
the ‘Granth’ containing the bani of Sikh Gurus,
Bhagats, Bhatts and devout Sikhs was declared
as ‘Pothi Parmeshar of Thaan’ (Place of
dwelling of God) in 1604 by Guru Arjun.
Finally, the ‘Pothi’ was declared “Granth
Guru’ by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 [\[11\]](#) and
“Sikhi” became a well organized religion.

Who is a ਸਿਖੁ (SIKH)?

Guru Nanak describes ‘Sikh’ as follows:

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ¹ ਨੀਰੁ² ਗਿਆਨਿ³ ਮਨ⁴ ਮਜਨੁ⁵ਅਠਸਠਿ⁶ ਤੀਰਥ⁷ ਸੰਗਿ⁸ ਗਰੇ ॥Amrit¹ nīr giān man majan
aṭhsath⁶ tīrath sang gahe.*The one⁴ who bathes⁵ in the life-giving¹
water² of wisdom³
gets⁸ the benefit of bathing at
sixty-eight⁶ sacred places⁷.*ਗੁਰ⁹ ਉਪਦੇਸਿ¹⁰ ਜਵਾਹਰ¹¹ ਮਾਣਕ¹²ਸੇਵੇ¹³ ਸਿਖੁ¹⁴ ਸੁੇ ਖੋਜਿ¹⁵ ਲਹੈ ॥੧॥Gur updes javāhar māṅak
seve sikh so kḥoj lahai. ||1||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1328.

*The above enlightening⁹ philosophy/teachings¹⁰
are like gems¹¹ and jewels¹² and the one who can
research/discover¹⁵ that fact is a Sikh¹⁴ and also
practises¹³ it.*

AGGS, M 1, p 1328.

The word, ਸਿਖੀ (Sikhi) has also been used as the plural of ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) by Guru Ramdas:

ਉਪਦੇਸੁ¹ ਜਿ ਦਿਤਾ² ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ³ ਸੇ ਸੁਣਿਆ⁴ ਸਿਖੀ⁵ ਕੰਨੇ ॥

Updes jē dītā satgurū so suniā sikhī kanne.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 314.

*The Sikhs⁵ listened⁴ to the teachings/philosophy¹
imparted² by the True Guru³.*

AGGS, M 4, p 314.

Note: Here the ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ³ (True Guru) is Nanak as described by Guru Arjun above.

The word ‘Sikh’ also has other meanings, explained as follows:

ਸਿਖ (Sikh) as “teachings/philosophy”:ਮਤਿ¹ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ² ਜਵਾਹਰ³ ਮਾਣਕ⁴ਜੇ ਇਕ⁵ ਗੁਰ⁶ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ⁷ ਸੁਣੀ⁸ ॥Mat vich¹ ratan javāhar māṅik
je ik gur kī sikh sunī.*By listening⁸ (accepting and practicing) to even
one⁵ of the basic principles of the enlightening⁶
philosophy⁷, one's mind¹ becomes filled with
gems², jewels³, and rubies⁴ (wisdom).*

AGGS, Jap # 6, p 2.

ਸਿਖ (Sikh) as “advice/philosophy”:ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ¹ ਸਿਖ² ਹਮਾਰੀ³ ॥

Sun sun sikh hamārī.

ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ⁴ ਕੀਤਾ ਰਹਸੀ ਮੇਰੇ⁵ ਜੀਅੜੇ⁶ਬਹੁੜਿ⁷ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੀ⁸ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥Sukarit⁴ kītā rahsī mere jīāṛe
bahuṛ na āvai vārī. ||1|| rahāo.

Guru Nanak says:

*Oh my⁵ Mind⁶! Listen¹ to my³ advice/philosophy²,
do good deeds⁴ now (in this life) since there is no
life⁸ again⁷ to do so.*

AGGS, M 1, 154.

The above discussion indicates that when ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) is spelled with onkar on khakha (ਖੁ), it means the one who researches/discovers the enlightening philosophy and practices it. On the other hand, when ਸਿਖ (sikh) spelled with khakha (ਖ) as mukta, without oankar, it means teachings/advice/philosophy.**SIKHI MISREPRESENTED**

The “Sikhi of Guru Nanak has been misrepresented by his followers, Sikhs, and Non-Sikhs to make it an esoteric, miraculous, mystic, and ritualistic religion called “Sikhism” as discussed below.

The Sikh Became Ritualistic**According to Guru Nanak, a ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) is one who researches/discovers the “enlightening**

philosophy” as discussed earlier. Now that same Sikh has been assigned a number of duties and rituals to perform by Guru Ramdas:

The Sikhs must repeat Naam himself and make others do so:

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ

ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥

Jis no daiāl hovai merā suāmī
tis gursikh gurū updes suṇāvai.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਯੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ

ਜੇ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥੨॥

Jan Nānak dhūr mangai tis gursikh kī
jo āp japai avrah nām japāvai. ||2||

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 306.

Guru Ramdas says:

The Eternal Entity (God) bestows Its teachings and will be kind only when the Sikh of the Guru repeats Naam himself and inspires others to do so.

Consequently, Nanak will beg for the dust of the feet of that Sikh.*

AGGS, M 4, p 306.

*Nanak here is a pen name for Guru Ramdas.

Guru Ramdas also assigned a number of rituals* to be performed by Sikhs:

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ

ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ

ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥

ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ

ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੇਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥

ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ

ਬਹਦਿਆਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਜੇ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ

ਸੇ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 305.

Gur satgur kā jo sikh akhāe
so bhalke uṭh har nām dhiāvai.

Udam kare bhalke parbhātī
isnān kare amriṭ sar nāvai.

Updes gurū har har jap jāpai
sabḥ kilvikh pāp dokh lēh jāvai.

Fir chārai divas gurbāṇī gāvai
bahdiā uṭhdiā har nām dhiāvai.

Jo sās girās dhiāe merā har har
so gursikh gurū man bhāvai.

Manmohan Singh translate this as follows [12]:

He who calls himself a Sikh of the Great True Guru

should rise early and meditate on God's Name.

He should make efforts early in the morning, take a bath, and have ablution in the tank of nectar.

By repeating the Lord God's Name under the Guru's instruction,

all his sins, misdeeds, and accusations are wiped off.

Afterwards, at sunrise he sings gurbani, and whilst sitting or standing, he meditates on God's Name.

The Guru's disciple, who with every breath and morsel contemplates over my Lord God, becomes pleasing to the Guru's mind.

AGGS, M 4, p 305.



Figure 1. A number of *Akhand Paths* under one roof with nobody listening.

The first verse says “rise early and meditate on God’s name” The second verse says “take bath and have ablution” It should be take a bath first! The literal translation “ablution in the tank of nectar” is problematic because this “tank of nectar” was not built by Guru Ramdas at the time of composing this sabd. So obviously the words “bhalkey”, “uth” “parbhatee”, “ishnan”, “amritsar”, etc. need to be interpreted in the metaphoric sense in relation to one’s spiritual life and not physical life.

Even by ignoring the interpretation of the above stanza, it clearly indicates that some rituals* have been assigned by Guru Ramdas to be performed by a Sikh. ***Ritual**: a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.

As discussed above, ‘sabd’ was declared as ‘bani’ then ‘bani’ as Guru by Guru Ramdas (AGGS, M 4, p 982). After the compilation of bani of six Sikh Gurus, Bhagats, Bhattas, and some Sikhs into a ‘*pothi*’ (book), Guru Arjun declared this *pothi* as the *Parmeshar ka Thaaan* (Dwelling place for God) in 1604. In continuation of changing the ‘sabd’ to ‘bani’ to ‘Guru’ to ‘*pothi*’ which was *parmeshar*, it was declared as just ‘Guru’ by the 10th and final Guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708 after adding the bani of his father, Guru Teg Bahadur. Henceforth, ‘*pothi*’ became ‘*Guru Granth*’. Consequently, he ‘*Guru Granth*’ became an idol for worshipping, and various rituals are performed around it. [13] Now it is not only worshiped, but hundreds of *Akhand Paths* (non-stop recitation by paid persons) are performed in various gurdwaras (including at Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar) around the world. The irony is that no one is listening (Fig. 1 above).

Interpolation and Mis-interpolation

Interpolation and misconstruction of the bani of Guru Nanak and his philosophy has been going on since the demise of Guru Nanak. For example:

ੴ TO ੴ

The ੴ designed by Guru Nanak has been the most misunderstood part of the Commencing Verse by many Sikh theologians, scholars, and researchers for a long time. It is widely accepted as **ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Ek Oankaar*) or **ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ** (*Ek Aumkaar*) by Sikhs at large since Bhai Gurdas declared ੴ (open oora) as **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (Oankaar) in *pauri* 15, *vaar* 3. Chahal has discussed ੴ as an original logo designed by Guru Nanak that has nothing to do with **ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Ek Oankaar*) or **ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ** (*Ek Aumkaar*) [10, 14-17]. Now more documents have been used to re-affirm his previous findings that ੴ stands for **ਏਕੁ ਓਹੁ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ** (*Ek Oh Beant*) - One and Only in revised edition of his book, *JAP: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy*. [18] Here the interpolation and misrepresentation of ੴ into ੴ done by Dharam Parchar Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar has been reported.

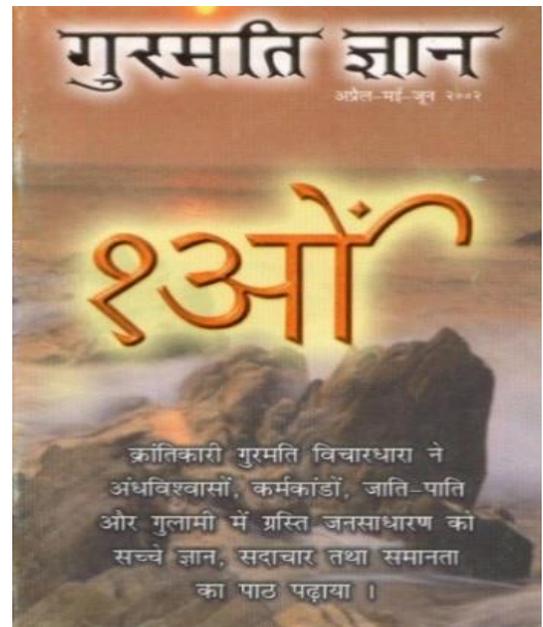


Figure 2: ੴ has been interpolated and misrepresented as

on the title page of *Gurmat Gian*, Monthly Magazine in Hindi.

The interpolated and misrepresented ੴ into

ੴ appears on a monthly magazine, *Gurmat Gian*, published in Hindi by the Dharam Parchar Committee of SGPC. It indicates how strongly the Dharam Parchar Committee of SGPC is involved in Vedantic philosophies to interpret ੴ as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Aumkaar*). Fig. 2.

Seminar on Mool Mantra

The University Grants Commission sponsored a seminar on the so-called mool mantra, which was organized by the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in March 1973. The proceedings of the seminar were edited by Professor Pritam Singh, retired Professor and Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, GNDU, under the title, *The Ultimate Reality – As Guru Nanak Saw It*. It took 12 years to publish the proceedings under a new title, *The Sikh Concept of the Divine*, in 1985 [18]. Most of the proceedings go against the basic principles of Nanakian Philosophy about *The Ultimate Reality*. For example, during this seminar, instead of looking into the originality and uniqueness of the logo ੴ, coined by Guru Nanak, it was confirmed by stalwart Sikh and non-Sikh scholars, that it is based on *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* (OM), the Trinity system of Vedantic philosophy. [19]

In this seminar, Parma Nand [20] undermined the originality of Nanakian Philosophy by declaring that *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* had already been used in various Upanishads. Therefore, ੴ (*Oankaar*) is

not a new word coined by Guru Nanak, but instead borrowed from the Upanishads. The only thing Guru Nanak did was to add the numeral '1' to confirm the oneness of God, which is also found in the Upanishads. Thus, Parma Nand also failed miserably to comprehend the teachings of Guru Nanak.

Commencing Verse

(ਅਰੰਭਿਕ ਵਾਕ - *arambic vaak*)

The complete Commencing Verse which appears in the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ ¹

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ
ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ²

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ³ ॥

It has been divided into three parts for its further study. The First part, ੴ, is the main heading, which is followed by two other parts as its attributes. It was Bhai Gurdas ([21] in Pauri 15, vaar 3), who declared ੴ as *Ek Oankar*, which represents the Trinity of God according to Upanishads. The whole Commencing Verse was declared the Mool Mantra according to Vedas' system of Mantra by Bhai Gurdas also.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ has been interpolated/misconstrued as ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ

The Commencing Verse appears in the beginning of the AGGS and at the beginning of every new section, new raga, and new subsection throughout the AGGS, either in its full form or in an abridged form. The shortest abridged form is ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (Ek Oh Beant ¹ sat² gur parsād.³) which appears 523 times in the AGGS.

It is unfortunate that the interpolated and misconstrued form, ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥, (*Ek*

Oankaar satnam Vaheguru) is now found in almost every gurdwara, including the Darbar Sahib Complex, Amritsar and at the beginning of many publications by some scholars, sants, and organizations. Regrettably, the *sangat* (congregation) is persuaded by many sants, preachers, *kathakaars* (interpreters) to chant it repeatedly in gurdwaras.

Who changed **ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥** (Ek Oh Beant¹ sat² gur parsād.³) into **ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥**, (*Ek Oankaar satnam Vaheguru*)? In spite of all my efforts, I could not find who could have done this.

Khanda Changing to Trishul Like

The commonly used Khanda has been misconstrued to look like Trishul – the first stage in making it a complete Trishul of Lord Shiva:



The first picture is of a Khanda, which is usually in and around almost all Gurdwaras and also on the turbans of Sikhs and letterheads of Sikh organizations.

The second picture is of a misconstrued Khanda showing a crescent, a double edged Khanda in the center, and two pointers downward at the bottom of the crescent. (Credit to this picture: <http://www.sikhmuseum.com/nishanmistaken/crescent.html#shiva9>) This appears to be the first stage to change it into a complete Trishul of Lord Shiva as shown in the third picture.

Now this misconstrued Khanda that looks like Trishul is adorned on the turbans of not only

Nihang Singhs but many other Sikhs, young and old.

It is not known who designed or misconstrued the first symbol that looks like Trishul. Nevertheless, the misconstrued Khanda in the second picture is being popularized by some organizations. The misconstrued Khanda is becoming popular, and the first symbol is disappearing. A detailed study on these Khandas will be reported by Prof. DS Chahal in the future.

Recent Example of Ignoring Guru Nanak's Contributions about 'Mother Earth Day':

The concept of **Earth Day** was first proposed by John McConnell in 1969 at a UNESCO Conference in San Francisco. McConnell proposed March 21, 1970, the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, which was accepted by Secretary General U Thant at the United Nations. [22] However, U.S. Senator, Gaylord Nelson proposed April 22, 1970. Later on, it was designated as **International Mother Earth Day** in 2009 by a consensus resolution adopted by the United Nations. [23]

Guru Nanak's contributions about the importance of air, water and the Earth, are worth celebrating on Earth Day. No Sikh ever recognized this fact; however, it was recognized by McConnell in 1969, exactly 500 years after Guru Nanak. McConnell (1915-2012) is peace activist with passion for peace, religion, and science. [24] Ironically, Sikhs took another 40 years to recognize Guru Nanak's contributions when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) initiated a program to help the world's religious traditions to create long-term plans to improve their relationship with the environment in 2009.

Under that program, Sikhs started their own **Eco Sikh** project for the celebration of **Sikh Environment Day**, not on March 21 or April 22,

but on March 14. This date was chosen because it was thought to be when Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, succeeded the House of Nanak [25], but the Encyclopedia of Sikhism [26] and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar say the true date is March 3, 1644. [27] This honor was given to Guru Har Rai simply for his passion of preserving flowers. Because on one occasion, his long robe broke a few flowers from a bush, which made him very sad. **Guru Nanak is the one who made humanity aware of the fact that air is the Guru, water is the father, and the Earth is the Great Mother who provides everything humanity needs. And Nanak said it is the duty of humanity to practice righteousness and protect Earth and the environment from pollution.**

**THE SIKH CLERGY AND SIKH
INTELLIGENTSIA FAILED TO
REPRESENT SIKHI (NANAKIAN
PHILOSOPHY) IN ITS REAL
PERSPECTIVE TO WORLD
PHILOSOPHERS AND HUMANITY**

Ishar Singh [28] noticed that Nankian philosophy had not been presented to the world prior to 1969, the time of the celebration of Guru Nanak's 500th Birthday Anniversary. He further said that the responsibility, perhaps, lies on the shoulders of the Sikh intelligentsia who have failed to make adequate efforts to understand Nanak's philosophy. **If one looks into the efforts of Sikh scholars during the celebration of the 500th Birthday of Guru Nanak, one would hardly find any literature propagating the philosophy of Guru Nanak in its true perspective.**

Chahal [10] was the first who tried to interpret the bani of Guru Nanak logically and scientifically in order to bring out his authentic philosophy. He also gave an academic term, Nanakian Philosophy, to the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani and incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). [10]

Bouquet [29], McLeod [30], Khushwant Singh [31], and many others have declared that Sikhism (Sikhism) is a hybridization between Islam and Hinduism.

According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha [9], the Sikh literature of the 18th and 19th centuries was written according to the level of intelligence and beliefs of the writers.

Prof. Puran Singh [32] wrote in the 1920s:
"It is to be regretted that Sikh and Hindu scholars are interpreting Guru Nanak in the futile terms of the colour he used, the brush he took; are analyzing the skin and flesh of his words and dissecting texts to find the Guru's meaning to be the same as of the Vedas and Upanishad!"

This indicates enslavement to the power of Brahmanical tradition. Dead words are used to interpret the fire of the Master's soul! The results are always grotesque and clumsy translations which have no meaning at all."

Dr. Gopal Singh [33] observed that due to improper understanding of the Guru's Word, the Adi (Aad) Granth started to be worshipped more than read and uttered as a magical formula or a mantra for secular benefits since it was declared GURU by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. Consequently, understanding of 'sabd' (words) as Guru has been lost forever.

The Sikh Marg Web Site has observed that:
"Misunderstanding regarding the principles, concepts and philosophy of a religion exists, usually not only in the minds of those who are not members of it but also in the minds of those who profess to be its true followers, or even champions and preachers of that faith. In case of Sikhism this is particularly so. Most of what is said, followed and preached by majority of the Sikhs about Sikhism, cannot be considered a part of the Sikh faith, rather some of it is anti-Sikhism. We have developed our own interpretation of Sikhism by watching the behavior and actions of political and

religious leaders which quite often may not agree with the principles of the faith.” [34]

Brar [35], while writing an article “*Sikhism in the 21st Century: The Challenging Road Ahead*” in *Sikh Marg Web Site*, reported the current situation of Sikhism in Western countries as follows:

“At this time the Sikh religion is firmly in control of the older generations from Punjab and its religious institutions around the world are run as virtual extensions of Punjab and the Punjabi mentality.”

Many issues are not dealt with because they never had to be dealt with in the past and it is always easier to maintain the status quo rather than try to find new answers.

What will happen ten or fifteen years down the road when the Sikh religious institutions around the world are run by a new generation which were not born in Punjab or have very little contact with Punjab?

A lot of these potential problems that Sikhs will be facing are still in their infancy right now. Either Sikhs can choose to ignore them today as they have been to a large extent, which means that they will become major crises for the religion tomorrow, or they can start planning and trying to develop solutions.

We are approaching a major crossroads as a religion which will either see Sikhism become truly a major world religion as the Gurus wished or we will see it wither away and become extinct over time. The choice is clearly in our own hands.”

Though this article was written about 15 years ago, gurdwaras in India and the West are still not run by the younger generation.

Chahal [36, 37] has discussed this issue in 1996 and again in 1999 at the time of Vaisakhi. The

progression and regression of Sikhism from 1469 to 1999 has served as a base for the representation of Sikhism and the interpretation of gurbani in their real perspective to Sikhs and non-Sikhs. A tentative line of action was suggested for further action, but nothing happened, even during 2016 - 2017 at the time of the celebration of the 350th Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Sikh community the world over celebrated the 350th Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) in 2016. The yearlong celebrations, which commenced in January 2016, were concluded during the first week of January 2017 at Patna Sahib in Bihar, and were comprised of a number of religious, academic, humanitarian, and other events. The Central Government of India, as well as the Governments of Bihar and Punjab, have contributed immensely to this cause.

The Union Finance Ministry allocated a package of Rs100 crore (US\$16 million) for the celebrations. The Bihar government spent Rs100 crore (US\$16 million) on beautifying Patna Sahib, the Capital of Bihar and on the arrangements and celebrations. [38] The way in which Sikhi and Guru Gobind Singh were represented during the 350th birthday of Guru Gobind Singh is yet to be discovered.

ORIGINALITY IN BANI OF GURU NANAK IS LOST DURING LAST 550 YEARS

A lot has already been discussed about the loss of originality of Sikhi; nevertheless, I would like to quote the views of some famous scholars who promoted the theory of the lack of originality in the philosophy of Guru Nanak:

Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, President, Sahitya Akademi, has belittled Nanakian Philosophy in the foreword to the book, *Guru Nanak: Founder of Sikhism*, (published by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee - DSGM) written by Dr. Trilochan Singh, who is held in

high esteem as a Sikh scholar. [39] This book was written on the eve of the celebration of the 500th Birthday (*parkash divas*) of Guru Nanak. **It is ironic that Trilochan Singh failed to notice Chatterji's following statement belittling the Guru:**

“The people of the Punjab (and along with those of the rest of India) became immediately conscious of the value of Guru Nanak’s advent and his teachings after he began to preach to them; and **Guru Nanak built up and organised during his life time a very important religious persuasion which was broad-based on the foundations of Vedantic Monotheistic Jnana and Puranic Bhakti. The faith preached by Guru Nanak was nothing new for India, it was basically the old monotheistic creed of the ancient Hindus as propounded in the Vedas and the Upanishads - the Vedanta with its insistence upon Jnana or Knowledge of the One Supreme Reality. And this monotheistic basis was fortified, so to say, to put the matter in a simple form by Bhakti or faith as inculcated in later Puranic Hinduism. The Sikh Panth was nothing but a reformed and simplified Sanatana Dharma of medieval times.**”

The book, *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, is part of the Indian Series of the Translations Collection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [17]. It was published in accordance with an agreement between UNESCO and the Government of India, to further mutual appreciation of the cultural values of East and West. This book was printed in 1973 just after the celebration of Guru Nanak’s 500th Birthday. This book was written by prominent Sikh theologians, scholars, and historians such as Trilochan Singh, Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkrishan Singh, and Khushwant Singh. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan undermined the philosophy of Guru Nanak in the introduction to this book as follows:

“At a time when men were conscious of failure, Nanak appeared to renovate the spirit of religion

and the humanity. **He did not found a new faith or organize a new community. That was done by his successor, notably the fifth Guru.** Nanak tried to build a nation of self-respecting men and women, devoted to God and their leaders, filled with sense of equality and brotherhood for all. The Gurus are the light-bearers to mankind. They are the messengers of the timeless. **They do not claim to teach a new doctrine but only to renew the eternal wisdom. Nanak elaborated the views of Vaisnava saints.”**

It is clearly apparent that Dr. Radhakrishnan failed to comprehend Nanakian Philosophy correctly and refused to accept that the Guru taught a new philosophy based on unique and universally acceptable principles. He further undermined the philosophy of Guru Nanak by saying that Nanak elaborated the views of the Vaisnava saints; however, Guru Nanak emphatically condemned the Vaisnava views in his writings.

Probably under the influence of the above statement of Dr. Radhakrishnan, Arnold Toynbee wrote about Guru Nanak in the same UNESCO’s book as follows [40]:

“Perhaps Nanak himself would have modestly disclaimed the title of ‘founder’. He might have preferred to say that he was merely bringing to light, and gathering the cardinal religious truth and precepts that had been scattered, in explicit form or implicitly, through the religious legacies of a number of forerunners of his.”

Arnold Toynbee has gone a step further than Radhakrishnan by putting words in the mouth of Guru Nanak to disclaim that he is the founder of a unique philosophy, instead claiming he explicated the philosophy of his forerunners.

Considering the various references discussed earlier, it becomes rather obvious that Nanakian Philosophy has not only been misunderstood by theologians, but even well-educated scholars

mentioned above have failed to comprehend the originality of Nanakian Philosophy.

Influence of Vedanta in old Sikh Literature

Taran Singh [41], the then Head of the Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, admits that:

“ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਦੁਲਾਘਾਂ ਪੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸੇਧ ਇਹੋ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਸਕੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਿ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਸੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਤੋਂ ਭਿੰਨ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਇਹ ਬੜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ।” (In Foreword). Tentative English translation:

It appears that universities have taken good steps in the research of *Gurbani*, although **their research could only establish that the truth in the AGGS is not different than the truth of ancient India**, but this is a powerful achievement.

Dr. Taran Singh [41] has also reported that the Sikh and non-Sikh writers of the 17th to 19th centuries had accepted that the Gurus’ philosophy is based on Vedantic philosophy:

“ਵਿਆਖਿਆਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ ‘ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਗੋਚਰ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਉਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਨੂੰ ਅਠ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਚੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅੰਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਫਰਕ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਚੇਤੰਨ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਿਹਾ। ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤੀਕ ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੈਦਿਕ

ਰੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਆਮ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਤੋਂ ਭਿੰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। (in Foreword)

Tentative English translation:

After careful study of the work of all the interpreters, it becomes apparent to us that although 8 different schools have already worked on this project, they had no basic differences in their approach and also no differences in their findings. They had no objective to promote the Gurus’ philosophy in its originality. **Whatever they have achieved, it is evident that they have accepted the Gurus’ philosophy as Vedic philosophy and also that it is not different than that of Brahmanism and Hindu philosophies.**

Besides the above views of modern and famous scholars, Taran Singh [41] and Joginder Singh [42] also reported that right from the very beginning, the old schools of Sikhism were interpreting Gurbani and representing Sikhism according to Vedantic philosophy.

Illiteracy about Sikhi (Sikhism)

Recently, illiteracy about Sikhism has also been recognized by the custodians of Sikhism, Sikh scholars, and Sikhs at large. S. Avtar Singh Makkar [43], the then President of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, has realized the illiteracy about Sikhi (Sikhism) among Sikhs, although the scholars of other world religions show a great interest in knowing Sikhi:

“ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਜੇਥੇ ਇਹ ਮਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ-ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਲ ਖਿਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਣ ਹਿਤ ਸਰਗਰਮੀ ਵਿਖਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਇਥੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਖਤਰੇ ਦੀ ਘੰਟੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ

ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ ਅਨਮੋਲ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਤੋਂ ਅਨਜਾਣ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ।”

Tentative English Translation:

For all of us (the Sikhs) it is a matter of pride that Sikh *dharam* (religion) has received the attention of scholars, students, and religious preachers from the field of the religions of the world, and they are expressing their seriousness in activities to understand Sikh *dharam*. **But for all of us (the Sikhs), it is an issue of worry and a warning of danger that a large number of families connected with Sikh *dharam* are becoming unaware of this invaluable heritage.** (In Foreword)

Similarly, Dr. Jodh Singh, Prof. of *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala has discovered that the objective of many scholars is to amalgamate Sikhi into Hinduism [43]:

“ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਖਾਸਤੋਰ ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਧੁੰਧਲਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਪੈਰਾਇਕ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨਵੇਂ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਲਗੱਡ ਕਿਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ ਅਰੰਭੀ ਹੈ ।”

Tentative English Translation:

Many of the scholars associated with ancient Indian philosophy, especially Indian scholars, have begun to amalgamate Sikh dharma into Hinduism by fogging its unique identity and refusing to accept Sikh dharma as a new dharma by exploiting the use of ancient names (of God) and (of sacred) places mentioned in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib*.

Dr. Jodh Singh has further warned that serious efforts are being made to erase the uniqueness and originality of Sikhi from religious literature. They

are trying to return Sikhs to their original status of the time before Guru Nanak by subduing them:

“ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪਰਤੱਖ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਉਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਏ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਪਛਾਣ ਭੁਲਕੇ ਉਥੇ ਜਾ ਖੜਨ ਜਿਥੋਂ ਇਹ ਚੱਲੇ ਸਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਣ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸਾਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਰੋਲ ਘਚੇਲਾ ਖੜਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਥਿੜਕ ਜਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ।”

Tentative English Translation:

In these days, it is evident that a lot of pressure from within and without is being put on the followers (of Sikhi) so that after they forget their independent identity, they go back to the original status wherefrom they started. Such laws are being enacted to create confusion in their minds so that they slip away from the principles of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* and they are forced to fall back to the slavery of old religious, social, and political ways of living again.

It is an encouraging sign that the custodian of Sikhi (Sikhism), S. Avtar Singh Makkar, President of SGPC, Amritsar, and a famous Professor of *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, have recognized the illiteracy about Sikhism and the cause of this illiteracy. Currently, the illiteracy about Sikhism is also being felt among the young Sikhs of the Science Age. They often claim that they do not understand Sikhi (Sikhism) the way it is being taught in the gurdwaras and represented in Sikh literature.

Alas, when the contemporary Sikh scholars, for unknown reasons, have exhibited their failure in comprehending the original nature of Nanakian Philosophy, it certainly seems like an

insurmountable task to explain the quintessence of Guru Nanak's philosophy to the masses.

CAUSES OF MISREPRESENTATION OF SIKHI (SIKHISM)

The major cause of misrepresentation of Sikhi (Sikhism) is because of a lack of comprehension of the philosophy embodied in the bani (words) of Guru Nanak. This situation was realized by Guru Nanak himself:

ਬਾਣੀ¹ ਬਿਰਲਉ² ਬੀਚਾਰਸੀ³

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ⁴ ਹੋਇ ॥

Baṇī birlao bīchārsī
je ko gurmukhī hoe.

ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ⁵ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ⁶ ਕੀ

ਨਿਜ⁷ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥੪੦॥

Ih baṇī mahā purakhī kī
nij ghar vāsā ho'e. ||40||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 935.

Only the rare² Guru-oriented⁴ will deliberate and contemplate³ on the word¹ (philosophy). This is the word⁵ (philosophy) of the pre-eminent preceptor⁶ that is to be imbibed in one's own mind⁷. AGGS, M 1, p 935.

It is true that very few Sikhs are deliberating gurbani in its real perspective. But the majority of them will readily accept any wrong concept preached or taught without verifying the facts, even during the current Science Age. Guru Nanak has described this inherited character of humans as follows:

ਖੋਟੇ ਕਉ ਖਰਾ ਕਰੈ ਖਰੇ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ॥

ਅੰਧੇ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਖੁ ਕਲੀ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਡਾਣੈ ॥੩॥

Khote kao kharā kahai khare sār na jāṇai.
Andhe kā nāo pārkhū kalī kāl vidāṇai. ||3||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 229.

In general, people are unable to distinguish

between wrong and right. They call ignorant people the appraisers, who determine authenticity.

AGGS, M 1, p 229.

Similarly, Guru Arjun also said that, in general, people easily accept false statements to be true, do wrong things, and follow the path that is crooked:

ਝੂਠੁ¹ ਬਾਤ² ਸਾ ਸਚੁ³ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਤੀ⁴ ॥

Jhūṭh bāt sā sach kar jāṭī.

ਸਤਿ⁵ ਹੋਵਨੁ ਮਨਿ⁶ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਰਾਤੀ⁷ ॥੨॥

Saṭ hovan man lagai na rāṭī. ||2||

ਬਾਵੈ⁸ ਮਾਰਗੁ⁹ ਟੇਢਾ¹⁰ ਚਲਨਾ ॥

Bāvai mārag tedhā chalnā.

ਸੀਧਾ¹¹ ਛੇਡਿ ਅਪੁਠਾ¹² ਬੁਨਨਾ¹³ ॥੩॥

Sīdhā chhod apūṭhā bunnā. ||3||

ਦੁਹਾ ਸਿਰਿਆ¹⁴ ਕਾ ਖਸਮੁ¹⁵ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ¹⁶ ਸੋਈ ॥

Duhā siriā kā khasam parabh soī.

ਜਿਸੁ ਮੇਲੇ¹⁷ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਮੁਕਤਾ¹⁸ ਹੋਈ ॥੪॥੨੯॥੯੮॥

Jis mele Nānak so muktā hoī. ||4||29||98||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 185.

*One takes⁴ it to be true³ what is false^{1,2},
What is truth⁴ is not⁷ imbibed in one's mind⁶.
One (usually) takes the forbidden⁸ and crooked¹⁰
path⁹.*

*One abandons the right¹¹ method but weaves¹³ the
wrong¹² pattern.*

Nanak Says:

*Although both ways¹⁴ (right and wrong) are
happening under the Laws of Nature^{15,16},*

*Only those who are introduced¹⁷ to the right path
are liberated¹⁸.*

AGGS, M 5, p 185.

Due to this inherent weakness of humans as explained above, Sikhs at large take information given in the early writings of Sikh theologians and historians as true. Moreover, discontented and depressed people in general are more inclined to believe in mythical works coated with various allurements. And there was no dearth of such people then and even now.

The following quotes from non-Sikh philosophers are almost the same as what Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun said about 400 years before them:

“The public will believe anything, so long as it is not founded on truth.”

Edith Sitwell (1887-1964)

And

“A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.”

Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

Exactly what Sitwell said is happening with Sikhs of the 21st century since they will believe anything said by *Sants*, *Babas* (so-called sages), Sikh preachers, and *Kathakaars* (interpreters) in gurdwaras without verifying their authenticity.

On the other hand, if anybody says the truth, that is declared as blasphemy by the custodians of religions. As quoted by [Robert Green Ingersoll \(1833-1899\)](#):

*“This crime called **blasphemy** was invented by priests for the purpose of defending doctrines not able to take care of themselves.”*

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was right when he said that:

*“All great truths begin as **blasphemies**.”*

However, [Arthur Schopenhauer \(1788 - 1860\)](#) says that after truth faces strong oppositions, it will be accepted in the end:

All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.

The best example of this type of crime (blasphemy) committed in Europe is Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who declared that the Earth is not the center of the Universe and the Sun does not revolve around the Earth. This was first discovered by Copernicus (1473-1543), but he could not dare to say so and face the dire consequences.

In Sikhism there are many who have been punished and excommunicated by the Jathedar of Akal Takhat under the disguise of blasphemy for speaking the truth. In spite of this fact, there is no such recommendation for excommunication in the bani of Guru Nanak. Many Sikh scholars do not dare to say the truth about the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani and how it has been interpolated and or misinterpreted by the followers of Guru Nanak after his demise because of the **Draconian Law of excommunication used by the Jathedar of the Akal Takht.**

The true picture of Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak and what happened thereafter will not be discovered until this Draconian Law is declared a practice of anti-Sikhi.

NOW THE QUESTION BEFORE US IS: IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK ORIGINAL AND UNIQUE?

My study of the bani of Guru Nanak indicates that it is logical, original, and unique when it is interpreted critically, logically, and scientifically. Besides, it is also evident that though the philosophy was formulated during the 15th and 16th centuries, **it has universal acceptability and applicability during the 21st century [44].**

Some non-Sikh scholars have also expressed similar views about Guru Nanak’s philosophy. For example, the statement by Rajanish Kumar, Director of Language Department, Punjab, about the universality of Guru Nanak’s message is noteworthy [45]:

“Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, has unflinching faith in the **divineness (or divinity) of man.** For the emancipation of mankind, he undertook hazardous and difficult journeys from place to place and covered most of East and Southeast. His aim was to rekindle the dormant divine potentialities in man all over the universe. **During his long sojourns he met people of different**

faiths and creeds and left an indelible impression on them all. This is a testimony to the universality of the message of the Great Guru."

Besides the earlier remarks of Arnold Toynbee, the world-renowned historian, it is worth mentioning his observations about the future of the religion and the Sikh scriptures [40]:

"Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen: the living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in these days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race in this coming religious debate, **the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world."**

If the above statement of Arnold Toynbee is correct, then how could one re-discover the Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak in its originality and uniqueness to say to the rest of the world?

HOW TO RE-DISCOVER THE ORIGINALITY OF SIKHI FOUNDED BY GURU NANAK

Toynbee admits that, "*Mankind's religious future may be obscure*"; I agree with him to a great extent. I also agree with his second observation that "*...the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to rest of the world.*"

To achieve this task, let us follow the advice of Guru Nanak:

ਖੇਜੀ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਾਦੀ ਬਿਨਮੈ ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥

"The researcher progresses while the other (discursive and aimless) perishes; (Nanak) sacrifices himself on the Guru, the Creative Force."

AGGS, M 1, p 1255.

Therefore, the Sikh intelligentsia has to conduct serious research to re-discover the originality and uniqueness in the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani.

The second part of his observation, "*...the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world*" and the above advice of Guru Nanak inspired me to conduct research to explore if there is any originality and uniqueness in the philosophy of Guru Nanak which could have special value to the rest of the world. In continuation of this mission for over 30 years, I have applied current scientific knowledge and logic to highlight that Nanakian Philosophy is the noble and profound work of Guru Nanak and is relevant for the people of today. As suggested by Albert Einstein:

"After religious teachers accomplish the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge."

The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS), Laval, Québec, Canada has already held some conferences during the last 20 years of its existence to re-discover Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the bani of Guru Nanak. **Now the years 2018 and 2019 are dedicated to re-discover the originality and uniqueness of the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani on the eve of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak. An International Conference to celebrate the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak has also been arranged on May 11, 2019 in Montreal to re-discover Sikhi, founded by him, in its real perspective.**

SUMMARY

- 'Sikhi' according to Guru Nanak is "Enlightening Philosophy". However, it has become esoteric, mystic, miraculous, and ritualistic religion known as 'Sikhism'.
- 'Sikh' according to Guru Nanak is one who researches enlightening philosophy/wisdom and practices it. However, the Sikh of today has become a most ritualistic person. 'Sikh' also means teachings/philosophy.

□ The logo, ੴ, designed by Guru Nanak has been interpolated and misconstrued as *Ek Oankaar* or *Ek Omkaar*. However, *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* represents the Trinity of God and Guru Nanak does not accept the Trinity of God.

□ The commonly used symbol ॐ (*Khanda*) by the Sikhs is also being misconstrued to look like *Trishul* of Shiva.

• The common phrase of Guru Nanak, ੴ ਸਤਿ

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (*Ek Oh Beant¹ sat² gur parsād³*),

which appears 523 times in the AGGS, has been interpolated as ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥, (*Ek*

Oankaar satnam Vaheguru)? The word, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ

(*Vaheguru*), has never been used by any Sikh Guru whose bani is incorporated in the AGGS. This phrase is commonly found written in many gurdwaras and also in the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.

□ The organizers of **EcoSikh** started to celebrate **Sikh Environment Day** on March 14, the date when Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, succeeded the House of Nanak. They neglected to give credit to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi, for his passion for peace, religion, and science who made humanity aware of the fact that air is the Guru, water is the father and the Earth is the Great Mother who provides everything needed by humanity.

□ The Management Committee of the EcoSikh is requested to give credit to Guru Nanak before April 22, 2019 on his 550th Birthday. And Earth Day should also be celebrated on April 22 every year along with rest of the world.

□ The attempt of some Sikh and non-Sikhs to show that there is no originality in Sikhi has been exposed. It indicates that they failed to comprehend Sikhi in its real perspective.

• Causes of misinterpretation and

misrepresentation of Sikhi have been discussed.

□ The influence of Vedantic philosophy on Sikh scholars has been reported.

□ Illiteracy about Sikhi among the Sikhs has been recognized by custodians of Sikhi.

□ Finally, a new approach of application of logic and scientific information to interpret bani to re-discover Sikhi, as founded by Guru Nanak, has been recommended.

It is hoped the Sikh intelligentsia will re-discover the Sikhi of Guru Nanak in its real perspective during 2019, the year of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, USA; Dr Kaminder Singh Dhillon, Malaysia; Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, USA; and Dr Devinder Pal Singh, Canada for going through the MS and giving some suggestions. I am really thankful to Ms. Komal Sidhu, M.A., Speech-Language Pathologist, USA for editing the article two times.

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Gurbani Shabd Vichar

Karminder Singh PhD (Boston)

Aant Kaal ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ

THE *shabd* is composed by Bhagat Tarlochan ji in Raag Gurji and appears on Page 526 of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS).

A study of its existing interpretations – both in Punjabi *Teekas* and English Translations – indicates that it stands as amongst the most misinterpreted *shabds*. Given its subject matter, misinterpretation of the verses has the potential of creating severe distortions to our understanding of *Gurmat*.

This article attempts to provide authentic SGGS based meanings to the verses by using the *Gurbani Framework*.

The *Gurbani Framework* calls for the use of Gurbani within the SGGS to understand, explain, translate and interpret Gurbani. In some ways then, the *Gurbani Framework* is a response to a variety of distorted translations using *Vedantic*, *Taksalee*, *Sampardayee*, *Yogic*, *Sakhi* based and *Literal* frameworks – all of which use of sources OUTSIDE of Gurbani liberally to interpret Gurbani.

The complete Shabd is as follows:

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਲਛਮੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੧ ॥ *Aant Kaal*
Jo Lachmee Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey.
Sarap Joan Val Val Autrey.

ਅਰੀ ਬਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਤਿ ਬੀਸਰੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ *Aree*
Bayee Gobind Naam Mut Beesay. Rahao.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੨ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo*
Esteri Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Besva
Joan Val Val Autrey.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਸੂਕਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੩ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo*
Larrkay Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey.
Sooker Joan Val Val Autrey.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੪ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo*
Mandir Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Preyt
Joan Val Val Autrey.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ *Aant Kaal Narayan Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey*
Mrey

ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਪੀਤੰਬਰੁ ਵਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਬਸੈ
॥ ੫ ॥ ੨ ॥ . *Badt Tilochan Tay Nur Mukta*
Pitambar Va Kay Ridey Bsey.

THE PRIMARY & SECONDARY CONCEPTS IN THE SHABD

We can see that Bhagat Tarlochan ji deploys five primary concepts within his *Shabd*. They are: ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ *Antt Kaal*; ਸਿਮਰੈ *Simrey*; ਚਿੰਤਾ *Chintaa*; ਮਰੈ *Marey*; and ਜੋਨਿ *Joan*.

The translations of the above concepts as contained in *Teekas* using the *Vedic* paradigms (Fareedkot

Teeka and *Sampardayee Teeka* of Sant Kirpal Singh in particular) and English Translations (Sant Singh Khalsa MD and Manmohan Singh) define these concepts as follows:

- 1) ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ *Aant Kaal* – The final moments of life just before death.
- 2) ਸਿਮਰੈ *Simrey* – thinks or reflects
- 3) ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ - *Chintaa Meh Jey Mrey* – Dies with such thoughts. Death-bed thoughts.
- 4) ਮਰੈ - *Marey* – Physical Death.
- 5) ਜੋਨਿ *Joan* – Reincarnation (born again after physical death in other life forms)

Apart from the abovementioned five primary concepts, there are four secondary ones that Bhagat Tarlochan has used in his *shabd*. And the *teekas* or translations mentioned above translate them entirely in the literal sense as follows:

- 1) ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ *Sarap Joan* – Snake.
- 2) ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ *Besva Joan* – Prostitute.
- 3) ਸੂਕਰ ਜੋਨਿ *Sooker Joan* – Pig.
- 4) ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜੋਨਿ *Preyt Joan* – Goblin.

The translation of the *Shabd* as provided by Dr Sant Singh Khalsa MD is as follows:

GUJRI: At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again, in the form of serpents. ॥ 1 ॥ O sister, do not forget the Name of the Lord of the Universe. ॥ Pause ॥

At the very last moment, he who thinks of women, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a prostitute. ॥ 2 ॥ At the very last moment, one who thinks of his children, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a pig. ॥ 3 ॥

At the very last moment, one who thinks of mansions, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a goblin. || 4 ||
At the very last moment, one who thinks of the Lord, and dies in such thoughts, says Trilochan, that man shall be liberated; the Lord shall abide in his heart. || 5 || 2 ||

The question that needs to be examined pertains to whether this a correct translation of the verses that are composed by Bhagat Tirlochan ji and contained in the SGGS on page 526. Or are the verses wrongly translated because they are interpreted based on concepts and ideas that are contained in Vedic scriptures – in particular the Upanishads and the Garrur *puran* (one of the 18 *purans*) that focuses on the issue of what happens after life:

To answer that question, it is perhaps worth looking first at some of the PROBLEMS that arise out of such a translation that is based on external and non-Gurbani sources such as the Garrur *puran* and other Vedic texts.

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER ONE

Let us first look at the translation of Verse Two as provided.

**ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੨ ॥** *Aant Kaal Jo Esteri Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Besva Joan Val Val Autrey.*

Translation: At the very last moment, he who thinks of women, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a prostitute. || 2 || SANT SINGH KHALSA

The first problem that comes to mind is that a PROSTITUTE is not a *Joon*; not a life form.

Going by the notion of reincarnation as contained in the Vedic texts, one could be reincarnated as an animal, insect, bird; as a mammal, reptile or amphibian because these are life forms.

But one CANNOT be reincarnated as a prostitute. And certainly NOT again and again. A PROSTITUTE is simply NOT a life form.

One is not BORN a prostitute. One BECOMES a prostitute – while living in the life form of A HUMAN BEING. One becomes a prostitute by choosing to adopt certain actions and behaviors.

It is clear therefore that to say that the verse **ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥ ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੨ ॥** *Aant Kaal Jo Esteri Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Besva Joan Val Val Autrey* translates as above makes no sense BECAUSE A PROSTITUTE IS NOT A JOON.

So that's problem number one. The meaning of JOON does NOT fit verse two. A PROSTITUTE IS NOT A JOON. The logical conclusion therefore is that the translation is wrong.

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER TWO

If indeed the translation is “At the very last moment, he who thinks of women, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a prostitute. || 2 ||” then one has to accept that Bhagat Tarlochan is gender biased – at least in this particular verse.

The translation ‘he who thinks of women’ only applies only to males. What would a “woman who thinks of a man at the very last moment” be “reincarnated over and over again” as?

Or are we to accept that the verse only applies to one half of the human race. The other half – in the form of women – stands exempted from the foretelling prophecies of the verse? Or worse, that

women stand outside the sphere of spirituality altogether? Or worst, that Sikh spirituality is irrelevant to them; that they can think of men on their death bed and it would make no difference?

What would we make then of the Gurbani verse on page 747 which makes clear that the messages of Gurbani are common for the entirety of mankind?

ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ
॥ Khatree Brahmin Sood Vais Updes Chau Varna Ko Sanjha.

The messages ਉਪਦੇਸੁ *Updes* is one, common and the same ਸਾਝਾ *Sanjha* for the entirety of mankind; EVEN IF it stands divided ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ *Chou Varna* as four castes ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ *Khatree Brahmin Sood Vais*.

Surely the one half of human race that is female is part of the entirety of mankind – whether divided into four castes by the pre-1469 religions – or united as equal by the spirituality of Guru Nanak and *Sikhi*.

For Guru Nanak to have personally selected this (and other) *Shabds* of Bhagat Tarlochan, for Guru Arjun to have included it in the *Pothi Sahib*; and for Guru Gobind Singh to have endorsed it as Gurbani and part of our Guru – the *SGGS* – surely Bhagat Tarlochan and his compositions must meet the benchmark of the “unified nature” of mankind as the basic principle of *Gurmat*.

In other words, the very fact that the *Shabd* under discussion is included in the *SGGS* is clear and unequivocal evidence that Bhagat Tarlochan is a non-subscriber to the divisive principles – caste, gender and any other - of the pre-1469 religions.

Yet the translation of the verse as provided seems to portray Bhagat Tarlochan as exactly the reverse.

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER THREE

An examination of the translation of Verse four brings forth problem number three.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੪ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo Mandir Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Preyt Joan Val Val Autrey.*

The translation that is given is: At the very last moments of life, one who thinks of mansions, and dies in such thoughts, shall be reincarnated over and over again as a goblin. ॥ 4 ॥ **SANT SINGH KHALSA**

The question that needs to be examined pertains to the existence of a goblin. A goblin obviously does not exist in the physical sense. It certainly does not exist as a life form. The usage of the word “form” in the phrase “life form” means it must have a form. How could one be reincarnated as a goblin if it did not exist?

So we have two *joons* or two life forms that are problematic. A prostitute is NOT a *Joon* and the Goblin does NOT exist physically.

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER FOUR

An examination of the translation of verse FIVE brings forth problem number three:

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਪੀਤੰਬਰੁ ਵਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਦੈ
ਬਸੈ ॥ ੫ ॥ ੨ ॥ *Aant Kaal Narayan Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Badt Tilochan Tay Nur Mukta Pitambar Va Kay Ridey Bsey.*

The translation as provided is: At the very last moment, one who thinks of the Lord, and dies in such thoughts, says Trilochan, that man shall be liberated; the Lord shall abide in his heart. ॥ 5 ॥ 2 ॥ **SANT SINGH KHALSA**

If indeed this translation is true; then the way to “liberation” for anyone who desires liberation is truly very simple.

Going by the logic of the translation, one could spend one’s entire lifetime doing all the WRONG things one desires.

Going by the rationality of the translation, we could spend our entire life time indulging in sinful activities, negative thoughts, hurtful activities; and devote our life towards activities pertaining to thievery, lies and deceit. We could dedicate our whole life living a lie and indulging in vices.

But if AT THE TIME OF DEATH, DURING THE LAST MOMENTS OF DEATH, we could think of the Lord – or say His name, and die in such thoughts – and we will be liberated.

Now that would be as wonderful as it is easy. One minute of death bed thinking of God would get us liberated, and into heaven. Just like that.

There would indeed be NO need for spirituality. No need to spend a lifetime of learning of doing good. No need to contribute to humanity and make our world a better place than the one we were born into. No need for reading Gurbani etc. No need to know and understand 1429 pages of SGGS.

The only thing that would matter would be the FINAL FEW moments of life – ten or twenty seconds before we die – all we will need to do is to think of the Lord during this time and we will be liberated.

It hardly needs to be said that such a notion is most ridiculous. It is ludicrous, if not absurd by the most rudimentary percepts of just about any spirituality. Surely Guru Nanak and the succeeding Gurus didn’t spend 240 years traveling far and wide and writing 1429 pages of Gurbani to tell us such an absurd thing.

It is obvious therefore that the translation of the verses as provided above are deeply faulty.

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER FIVE

The fifth problem pertains to the nature of death as we understand it.

A great many people die of strokes, heart attacks, in accidents, of gunshot wounds, of lightning strikes, falls, overdoses, in car mishaps, airplane crashes etc. The list is long.

A great many people go into comas for hours, days, weeks or even months before they die. Many millions die in their sleep. In short a great number of people die SUDDEN deaths.

For the very large majority of people therefore, death is always sudden. It is always UNEXPECTED. Death is WITHOUT NOTICE for a vast majority of human beings. Death is without WARNING.

And if this is the case, then its logical to accept that a very LARGE majority of people – close to 99 percent of humans have NO opportunity to even formulate their thoughts during their final moments of life just before death.

How does one even know when the last moments of life are when no one actually knows when death is coming.?

So how is the so called reincarnation formula going to be decided for these 99% of people who met sudden deaths?

Going by such logic, sudden deaths have NO ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਸਿਮਰੈ *Ant Kaal Simrey*. At the very least sudden deaths have NO ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ *Antt Kaal* moments that one could be AWARE OF in the first place.

In other words, how is anyone to know when one's ANT KAAL is, when NO ONE EVER knows the moment of death.

One would have to know that I am dying at 7.15 am. Then at 7.14 am I start to think of the Lord. And then at 7.15 am that would be my final thought, my last thought, my dying thought. Then, and only then, according to the translation above, would I qualify for liberation.

As defeatist as it may sound, it must be said that the only people who probably know they are going to die at 7:15 am are those who have made arrangements for suicide. Even then there would be no guarantee that death would indeed occur at 7: 15 am.

What this means that IF WE accept the translation of the verses as above, then this final verse only applies to a miniscule number of the people who through some miraculous powers unknown to mankind, KNOW when they are going to die, and know when their ANT KAAL is, who then make a CHOICE of WHAT to think of (woman, wealth, children, mansions, and God).

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER SIX.

The sixth problem with the translations as provided pertains to the 8.4 million life forms that form the basis of the Vedic theory concerning reincarnation.

Sans the Rahao Verse, this *shabd* has five verses. Four are about reincarnations in various forms. The first talks about reincarnating as a serpent, the second as a prostitute, the third as a pig and the fourth as a goblin. These are four life forms – according to the translation.

But since we have determined that prostitute and goblin are NOT life forms; we are left with two: the serpent and the pig.

The question that needs examining is this: are these two the ONLY life forms that human beings reincarnate into? What final thoughts at one's death bed are required for reincarnating into the remaining 8.4 million life forms? Why are two life forms – serpent and pig – being singled out by Bhagat Tarlochan ji in this *Shabd*?

A DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION – PROBLEM NUMBER SEVEN.

The seventh problem with the translation above has got to do with its prophetic nature. If indeed the translation is correct that a person who thinks of woman at the time of death will be reincarnated as a prostitute in his or her next life – then this amounts to a prophecy.

Serious students of Gurbani know that the SGGS does not indulge in prophecies. Certainly not in matters concerning what would happen to us after death. *Gurmat* accepts the task of birth and death are the responsibility of our Creator alone.

This is what Guru Nanak has to say about what happens to life after death. This is on page 648.

ਮ: ੧ ॥ ਇਕ ਦਝਹਿ ਇਕ ਦਬੀਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਕੁਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ
॥ ਇਕਿ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਸਟੀਅਹਿ ਇਕਿ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਸਣਿ
ਪਾਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਹਿ ॥ ੨

॥ M: 1. Ek Dajhey Ek Dubbeah Ekna Kutey Khahey. Ek Panni Vich Usatteah Ek Bhi Fir Hasann Pahe. Nanak Eyv Na Japyee Kithey Jaye Smahe.

Meaning: Some burn their dead, some bury, some allow animals to consume them. Some are discarded in water, some in wells. Nanak, no one knows where they go and reside.

How could it be that we have Guru Nanak ji saying on Page 648 that no one knows where the dead go and reside, but we have Tirlochan saying on page 526 that he can predict (according to the translation above) where dead will go and under what

conditions, as decided by what their dying thoughts are?

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF THE DEFECTIVE TRANSLATION

We thus have a string of problems that arise out of the above mentioned defective translation. We run into the above mentioned seven problems for ONE reason only. Which is that the five primary concepts namely: ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ *Aant Kaal*, ਸਿਮਰੈ *Simrey*, ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ *Chintaa Meh Jey Mrey*, ਜੇ ਮਰੈ *Jey Marey* and ਜੋਨਿ *Joan AS WELL AS* the four secondary concepts: ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ *Sarap Joan*, ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ *Besva Joan*, ਸੁਕਰ ਜੋਨਿ *Sooker Joan*; and ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜੋਨਿ *Preyt Joan* are wrongly translated.

The translations of the *concepts* are defective, resulting in a defective translation of the entire *shabd*.

There are two explanations for that:

FIRST these concepts of Gurbani are being translated and interpreted by using external sources- namely the Vedic texts of Upnishads, the Shastras, and Puranas. At the very least, the understanding of the concepts is being derived from these external sources.

Doing so results in a rehash of the ideas of the Vedic scripture as Gurbani ideas, as original Gurmat ideas! At the very least, doing such results in the use of rejected ideas as ideas fit for translating and interpreting Gurbani.

If indeed GURBANI is a rehash of the ideas of Vedas, Shastras, and Puranas, one may ask – what is so unique about *Sikhi* and Gurbani then?

One can even ask as to why we need Gurbani. Why can't we just go back and read the pre-1469 texts their original form?

The question then is: “what is the remedy for such a defect?” The prescription is that Gurbani must be interpreted using Gurbani. There are 1429 pages of Gurbani in the SGGS. It's a voluminous text.

All the concepts of Gurbani are defined and explained within Gurbani itself. There is little need to look outside.

The SECOND explanation is that the basic principle of translating Gurbani – namely the *Rahao* Principle has been neglected by the translator.

The principle is straightforward. The central idea of a *shabd* with a *Rahao* verse is contained within the *Rahao* verse. All the remaining verses of the *Shabd* must be translated on the basis of the central message of the *Rahao*.

The question that remains is this” If the above two principles - namely using Gurbani to explain Gurbani and the *Rahao* principle are applied, will we be able to get the true meaning of this *shabd* of Bhagat Tirlochan ji? The answer is Yes, of course.

To get to the correct and Gurmat based translation of the *Shabd*, the first thing we need to do is to use Gurbani to define the FIVE basic concepts that are used in this *Shabd* of Bhagat Tirlochan ji.

THE CONCEPTS DEFINED.

1) ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ *Aant Kaal*. ਅੰਤਿ *Aant* means final and ਕਾਲਿ *Kaal* can mean both death and time. In the context of Gurbani and Gurmat, “time” translates as spiritual opportunity during our life-time. On Page 1159 of the SGGS we have this verse

ਭਜਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਭੂਲਿ ਮਤ ਜਾਹੁ ॥ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮ ਕਾ ਏਹੀ ਲਾਹੁ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ *Bhajho Gobind Bhoool Mut Jaho. Manus Hanam Ka Ehi Lao.*

Meaning: Do Not Fail to Realize the Creator. His Realization is the Primary Purpose in our Human Life.

On the same page we have another verse

ਇਹੀ ਤੇਰਾ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਰ ॥ ਘਟ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਤੂ
ਦੇਖੁ ਬਿਚਾਰਿ ॥ *Ehi Tera Ausar Eh Teri Baar. Ghutt
Bheetr Tu Dekh Bechar.*

Meaning: This is the ONLY TIME; this human life time is the only opportunity.

Then on Page 12 we have

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ
ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ *Bhayee Praapa Manukh
Dehoria. Gobind Milann Ke Eh Teri Barea.*

Meaning: The Human Life has been Obtained. Our Life Time is the ONLY Opportunity to Realize the Creator Within.

On Page 1366 we have this verse of Bhagat Kabir ji

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਉ
ਬਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਕੇ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਹਿ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਲਾਗਹਿ ਡਾਰ ॥
*Kabir Manus Jnum Dolambh Hai Hoey Na Barey
Baar. Jion Bunn Full Pakey Bhuen Girey Bahur Na
Laghey Daar.*

Meaning: Kabeer Human Life is Priceless and does NOT occur a SECOND time. Just Like a Fruit that Drops to the Ground when it Ripens, it Does Not Ever Go Back to the Branch Again.

What we can surmise from the above verses is that human life happens only ONCE. Its purpose during our life time is to realize the Creator within. And the human life is the only single opportunity. It is

the FINAL opportunity. There will be no more opportunity.

On Page 332 we have a verse that uses *Antt Kaal* specifically.

ਸਰਜੀਉ ਕਾਟਹਿ ਨਿਰਜੀਉ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲ ਕਉ ਭਾਰੀ
॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ਭੈ ਡੂਬੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ॥ ੩
॥*Sarjio Kattah Nirjio Pujhey Aant Kaal Ko
Bharee. Ram Nam Ki Gat Nahi Jani Bhay Dubey
Sansari.*

Meaning: Offering living things to worship inanimate things, one's ANTT KAAL is wasted. (Because) One has not realized the Nam of the Omnipresent Creator, one's life is drowned in fear. When Gurbani says ANTT KAAL is wasted it means HUMAN LIFE is wasted; it means our LIFE TIME is squandered.

Then on Page 601 we have this verse

ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਦਾ ਸਮਾਲਿ ॥ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ ਤੇਰਾ
ਬੇਲੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਬਰੈ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ *Mun
Merey Har Jio Sda Smal. Aant Kaal Tera Beylee
Hovey Sda Nibhhey Tere Naal. Rahao.*

Meaning: O Mind, Remember the Creator always. It is your loyal companion (*Baylee*) in ANTT KAAL and will be ALWAYS AT YOUR SIDE.

Loyal companion in ANTT KAAL means loyal companion in HUMAN LIFE. A loyal companion is one who is loyal throughout our LIFE TIME. The companionship is qualified by saying "will always be at your side." Always be on your side in our life time. Always be on your side means for the entire period that we are alive.

Now, if we summarized all the above verses we can get the meaning of **Aant Kaal** in accordance with Gurbani;

AANT KAAL thus means the FINAL OPPORTUNITY to do something.

Since the objective of life is to REALIZE God in the here and now, and the human life is the ONE and ONLY opportunity to REALIZE God, then *Aant Kaal* refers to this FINAL OPPORTUNITY CALLED THE HUMAN LIFE.

Aant Kaal is the FINAL opportunity to realize the Creator within DURING OUR LIFE TIME. It is AANT meaning it is Final.

That's' human life. AANT KAAL is human life. There will not be a second opportunity, there will not be a second time.

2) Moving on in our attempt to define ਸਿਮਰੈ SIMREY; on Page 803 of the SGGS we have this verse

ਸਿਮਰਿ ਮਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਚਿਤਾਰੇ ॥ ਬਸਿ ਰਹੇ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਗੁਰ ਚਰਨ ਖਿਆਰੇ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ *Simer Mnaa Ram Nam Chitarey. Bas Rahey Hirdey Gur Charan Piarey. Rahao.*

Meaning: Contemplate and Internalize the Virtues of the Creator, O mind. Let the loving messages of the *shabd* reside within.

So ਸਿਮਰੈ SIMREY means Constant Remembrance with the objective of internalizing.

2) As for ਚਿੰਤਾ *Chintaa* – it comes from the word ਚਿੰਤਨ *CHINTAN*. It means to Focus, contemplate on something in our life time.

3) The concept of ਮਰੈ *Mrey*, which normally translates as death needs to be looked at from the spiritual and not purely physical point of view. Should one examine the verses relating to death in the SGGS, it becomes clear that out of every ten verses on the subject of death in Gurbani, nine are NOT concerning physical dying. Ninety percent of

the focus of Gurbani regarding death concerns itself with spiritual death.

The verses regarding physical dying are few, far in between and straightforward.

The messages relating to physical death are basically three, namely a) that it's inevitable, b) everyone will die and c) we are merely waiting our turn.

For instance, we have this verse on Page 936

ਰਾਣਾ ਰਾਉ ਨ ਕੇ ਰਹੈ ਰੰਗੁ ਨ ਤੁੰਗੁ ਫਕੀਰੁ ॥ ਵਾਰੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇਇ ਨ ਬੰਧੈ ਧੀਰੁ ॥ *Ranna Rao Na Ko Rhey Rang Na Tung Fakir. Vari Apo Aapnee Koey Na Bandhey Dheer.*

Meaning: The kings, the rich, the paupers and the holy. Everyone dies in turn None can stay forever.

So obviously this is an example of the one in ten verse that talks of physical dying.

But the remaining 90 percent of the verses relate to *spiritual* death. This happens when we get entangled in the five vices and become self-serving instead of serving humanity that is in need.

For instance, this verse on page 11 of the SGGS which we read daily

ਆਖਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ ॥ ਆਖਣਿ ਅਉਖਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥ *Aakhan Jiva Visrey Marr Jaon. Aakhunn Aukha Sacha Nao.*

Meaning: I die (spiritually) when I don't contemplate on You, God. When I take You out of my conscience. When I disregard your presence.

So the meaning of MAREY in Gurbani is spiritual death more than mere physical death.

Here is another verse on Page 523 of the SGGS

ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥ ਅਤਿ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਚਤੁਰ ਮੁਖਿ ਛਿਆਨੀ
ਧਨਵੰਤ ॥ ਮਿਰਤਕ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਨਹੀ
ਭਗਵੰਤ ॥ ੧ ॥ *Aat Sunder Kuleen Chatur Mukh
Gyani Dhanwant. Mirtek Kaheay Nanaka Jeh
Preet Nahin Bhagwant.*

Meaning: One can have the highest of human attributes of beauty, status, intellect, leadership, knowledge and wealth. But such a human is DEAD, O Nanak, if one does not have love for the Creator.

Obviously the meaning of ਮਿਰਤਕ *Mirtuk* – dead person – in this verse is someone who is dead spiritually, not physically.

This verse on page 88 of the SGGS provides yet another confirmation of spiritual death.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮ: ੩ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਜਿਨੀ ਨ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕੀਤੇ
ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਨ ਆਇਓ ਮਿਰਤਕੁ ਹੈ
ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥ *Salok M: 3. Satgur Jinee Na Seyveo
Shabd Na Kito Vichar. Antar Gyan Na Aiyo Mirtek
Hai Sansar.*

Meaning: Not serving the Guru is to not discourse the *shabd*. Enlightenment does not come and one will be (spiritually) dead while living in the world.

ਮਿਰਤਕੁ ਹੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ *Mirtuk Hai Sansar* translates literally as “dead while living in the world” and it means spiritually dead even if physically alive and kicking.

Spiritual death is of course viewed negatively in Gurbani. It can and must be avoided.

There is, however, another kind of death that is viewed *positively* in Gurbani. We can see such death from Bhagat Kabeer’s verses on page 1365

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਰਤਾ ਮਰਤਾ ਜਗੁ ਮੂਆ ਮਰਿ ਭੀ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ
ਕੋਇ ॥ ਐਸੇ ਮਰਨੇ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਮਰਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ ੨੯
॥ *Kabeer Marta Marta Jug Muaa Mar Bhi Na
Janeya Koey. Aisey Marney Jo Mrey Bahur Na
Marna Hoey.*

Meaning: Kabir, people in the world over have died and continue to die, but none have learnt to die the proper death. This is a death that whosoever dies such death does not die again.

In this context then, Gurbani is referring to death of a life that is imbued in vices. The reference is to a death defined as complete and absolute submission to Gurbani; submission to the Grace of God.

As the verse on Page 1343 exemplifies:

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਜੀਵਤ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਣੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਨਦਰਿ
ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ *Mun Marey Jivat Mur Jaan . Nanak
Nadree Nadar Pchaan.*

Meaning: To submit completely (ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੇ *Mun Marey*) to the grace of God, Nanak, is death (of self) in life (ਜੀਵਤ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਣੁ *Jeevat Mar Jaan*).

It can thus be seen that the primary concern of Gurbani is two kinds of death. One, spiritual death, that is to be avoided because it can be avoided and; two death of self, of our 5 vices, death by total and complete submission to the messages of Gurbani.

4) It remains now to try to decipher the meaning of the word ਜੁਨ *Joon* in accordance with Gurmat as derived from within the SGGS.

The dictionary meaning of ਜੁਨ *Joon* is a life form. Every living thing is therefore a *Joon*.

The Upanishad belief is that the soul takes different life forms after death, that there are 8.4 million life

forms (*Joons*) and that one becomes these life forms (*Joon*) after death.

On the other hand, Gurbani is concerned with living LIFE HERE AND NOW. In Gurbani a ਜੁਨ *Joon* refers to attributes, characters, behaviors and mind sets that human beings encounter while on the path of spirituality.

On Page 267 we have a verse that captures this notion of humans in human life form but with animalistic attributes and mind sets.

ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ ॥ ਲੋਕ ਪਚਾਰਾ ਕਰੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ *Kartoot Pasoo Kee Manus Jaat. Lok Pcharaa Krey Dinn Raat.*

Meaning: We are humans in creed, but of ANIMALISTIC character within our mind sets.

Gurbani mentions the names of animal life forms (*Joons*) and attributes their behaviors to the HUMAN life. Kabeer has a *shabad* on page 971 that describes negative mindsets. He sums it up in this verse:

ਆਵਾ ਗਵਨੁ ਹੇਤੁ ਹੈ ਫੁਨਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਇਹੁ ਪਰਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਤੂਟੈ ॥
੨ ॥ *Ava Gavan Hoat Hai Fun Fun Eh Parsang Nahi Tuttey.*

This cycle of adopting negative attributes (ਆਵਾ ਗਵਨੁ *Aava Gavun*) of different life forms WITHIN ME keeps happening every split of a second. This cycle never ends.

One takes the life form of a “dog” when one becomes greedy and desires things that belong to others. One takes on the life form of a serpent when one habitually spews venom against others. One takes on the life form of a donkey when one becomes egoistic even while being devoid of virtues altogether.

As Guru Nanak ji says on page 1246 of the SGGS

ਇਕਨਾ ਸੁਧਿ ਨ ਬੁਧਿ ਨ ਅਕਲਿ ਸਰ ਅਖਰ ਕਾ ਭੇਉ ਨ ਲਹੰਤਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ ਜਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤਿ ॥ ੨ ॥ *Ekna Sudh Na Budh Na Akal Sar Akhan Ka Bheyo Na Lahant. Nanak Sey Nurr Asal Khar Jey Bin Gunn Garab Krunt.*

That human (ਸੇ ਨਰ *Se Nurr*) is a true donkey life form (ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ *Asal Kharr*) when he becomes egoistic (ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤਿ *Garab Karant*) even when one does not possess a single virtue.

Note the donkey of Gurbani is a human (ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ *Nanak Se Nurr*) *Nurr* refers to a human. It’s a human being with donkey attributes of stubbornness.

And it’s the real donkey (ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ *Asal Kharr*). It is real because this is the kind of donkey that is OF CONCERN TO OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

Gurbani says there is an entire zoo of animal ATTRIBUTES within us in the form of our attitudes, behaviors, mind sets, characteristics, and way of thinking – all of which are negative and constitute ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ *Kartoot Pasu Kee*.

All these *Joons* exist within us HERE and NOW in our human life form. They exist within us while we are alive. And the objective of spirituality is to rid our minds from these animalistic traits, characters, behaviors, and attributes while we are alive.

The objective is to rid ourselves from the *Joons* that we are already living now.

GETTING TO THE TRUE MEANINGS BT APPLYING THE RAHAO PRINCIPLE.

Having understood the FIVE basic concepts used in this *shabd* by using Gurbani to understand them, we are now ready to interpret the verses. For this purpose, we need to understand the meaning of the word *Rahao* first. Virtually all English translations have translated it as “Pause.” This is of course a literal translation that adds no value to our understanding of the verse. It makes no sense that the writers of Gurbani would want us to “pause” at just one verse, or any particular one.

The true meaning of *Rahao* is derived contextually. In the context of poetry, it is the *Title Verse*. In the context of the musical composition – it is the *Asthai* or *Chorus Verse* – meaning the verse that is sung repeatedly. In the context of the message of the *shabd*, it is the *Central Verse*. Gurbani is all three – poetry, musical and message; hence all three meanings apply in conjunction with the particular context.

The *Rahao* principle is critical towards an accurate understanding of the messages of Gurbani. As mentioned above, the *Rahao* verse contains the gist, the crux, and the primary message of the *Shabd*. This in turn means we need to pay attention to the following three things.

One, that the remaining verses of the *Shabd* are either illustrations, exemplifications, or explanations of the *Rahao* verse. **Two**, this means that the *Rahao* verse has to be interpreted first so that all the other verses can be interpreted in the context of the *Rahao*. **Three**, all the other verses of the *shabd* must be interpreted on the basis of the *Rahao* verse.

The *Rahao* verse of the *shabd* under discussion is

ਅਰੀ ਬਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਤਿ ਬੀਸਰੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ *Aree Bayee Gobind Nam Mut Bisrey. Rahao*

The translation of the verse is : O mind of mine, never forsake the VIRTUES (*Nam*) of the Creator Lord.

The message of the verse is thus for the Sikh to Live a life of Godly VIRTUES, of Guru prescribed virtues. The message is also to contemplate on them always with the objective of realizing and becoming these Godly virtues.

There is also an inherent and in-built message: Do NOT drown or saturate your life in UN-GODLY attributes, because then there will be NO SPACE for Godly virtues.

This then, is the meaning of the *Rahao* verse and the rest of the *shabd* revolves around this.

The intrinsic message of the *Rahao* verse is: Living Godly virtues is life, and if I forget this way of living, then I die spiritually and though my physical body is living, looking like a human, I am living a life full of animalistic traits and characteristics.

As I don't want to live this animalistic way of life, I pray that I do not forget the virtues of God ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਤਿ ਬੀਸਰੈ *Gobind Naam Mutt Visrey*.

INTERPRETING THE SHABD.

Now let's interpret the first verse based on the *Rahao* verse:

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਲਛਮੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੧ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo Lachmee Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Sarap Joan Val Val Autrey.*

Meaning: Should Human Life (*Aant Kaal*) be spent in contemplation of material, spiritual death occurs in such focus and contemplation. (Spiritual death occurs under the influence of material because) it's a life lived in the cycle of negative traits of a serpent.

What is the meaning of living the life of a serpent?
The following verse on page 712 explains.

**ਬਿਨੁ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਜੇ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਬਲਨਾ ਸਰਪ ਜੈਸੇ ਅਰਜਾਰੀ ॥
ਨਵ ਖੰਡਨ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਅੰਤਿ ਚਲੈਗੋ ਹਾਰੀ ॥ ੧ ॥**

*Ben Simran Jo Jivan Balna Sarap Jaisey Arjaree.
Nuv Khandn Ko Raj Kmavey Aant Chaleygo Haree.*

Meaning: A life devoid of Godly contemplation is to live (ਜੀਵਨੁ *Jeevan*) the life of a serpent (ਸਰਪ ਜੈਸੇ ਅਰਜਾਰੀ *Sarap Jaisey Arjaree*.) One can win the entire planet, but one loses the ONE AND FINAL opportunity of LIFE (ਅੰਤਿ ਚਲੈਗੋ ਹਾਰੀ *Aant Chaleygo Haree*).

Now let's interpret the second verse based on the Rahao verse:

**ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਬੇਸਵਾ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੨ ॥ Aant Kaal Jo
Esteri Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Besva
Joan Val Val Autrey**

Meaning: Should Human Life (*Ant Kaal* - this final opportunity to realize God) be spent in contemplation of carnal pleasures, spiritual death occurs in such focus and contemplation. (Spiritual death under the influence of carnal pleasures occurs because) it's a life lived in the cycle of negative traits of a prostitute.

What is the meaning of living the life of a prostitute?

Let's look at this verse on page 1143 of the SGGS.

**ਭੈਰਉ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥ ਚਿਤਵਤ ਪਾਪ ਨ ਆਲਕੁ ਆਵੈ ॥
ਬੇਸੁਆ ਭਜਤ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਹ ਸਰਮਾਵੈ ॥ Bhairon Mehla 5:
Chitvat Pap Na Aaluk Avey. Besua Bhajut Kich Neh
Sarmavey**

Meaning: One who makes no delay and rushes instead to conceive sin, commit sin; such is akin to a prostitute who is shameless in one's deeds.

There is yet another verse that explains the word *Besua* on page 1415 of the SGGS.

**ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਭਰਮਦੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਪਤਿ
ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਬੇਸੁਆ ਕੇਰੇ ਪੁਤ ਜਿਉ ਪਿਤਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਜਾਇ
॥ Bikh Maya Karann Bharumdey Gir Ghar Ghar
Pat Gvayey. Besua Kayrey Poot Jion Pita Nam Tis
Jaye.**

Meaning: One loses one's dignity in the shameless and greedy pursuit of the pleasures of material everywhere. Such is akin to prostituting one's self and the pleasures are akin to the prostitute's child who has to bear the ignominy of indignity.

It is clear that Bhagat Tarlochan (and the our Gurus in the verses above) are NOT referring to a physical prostitute when they use the word *Besua*; but rather to the behavior, character and mind-set pertaining to the shameless pursuit of material goals at the expense of one's honor and dignity. The word *Besua* is thus being used in the metaphoric / idiomatic sense. Just like when we make a statement to the effect "Petty politicians have no qualms prostituting their principles for self gain." This is idiomatic use of the term.

Now let's interpret the third verse of our chosen *shabd* based on the Rahao Verse:

**ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ ਸੂਕਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੩ ॥ Aant Kaal
Jo Larrkay Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey.
Sooker Joan Val Val Autrey.**

Meaning: Should Human Life be spent in contemplation of offspring, spiritual death occurs in such focus and contemplation. (Spiritual death occurs under such influence because) it's a life lived in the cycle of negative traits of a hog.

What is the meaning of living the life of a hog?

This verse of Guru Teg Bahadur ji on page 1428 of the SGGS answers our query.

ਏਕ ਭਗਤਿ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਕੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਮਨਿ ॥ ਜੈਸੇ
ਸੂਕਰ ਸੁਆਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਨੇ ਤਾਹਿ ਤਨੁ ॥ ੪੪ ॥ *Eyek
Bhagat Bhagwan Jeh Prani Kay Nahe Mun. Jaisey
Sooker Suan Nanak Mano Tahe Tan.*

Meaning: A human who does not have love for the One Creator is living the life of a hog and a dog; even if in a human body.

Here is another verse on page 1105 of the SGGS that explains the same concept

ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਕਬਹੂ ਨਹੀ ਕੀਨੀ ਰਚਿਓ ਧੰਧੈ ਝੂਠ ॥
ਸੁਆਨ ਸੂਕਰ ਬਾਇਸ ਜਿਵੈ ਭਟਕਤੁ ਚਾਲਿਓ ਉਠਿ ॥ ੧
॥ *Sadhsangat Kabhu Nahi Kini Racheyo Dhandey
Jhooth. Suan Sookar Bayes Jivey Bhutkut Chaleyo
Uuth.*

Three animalistic mindsets are mentioned in this verse:

Meaning: Having never done *Sangat* of the Guru, but having concocted tasks of fakery; One lives one's life akin to that of a dog, hog and crow.

Now let's interpret the fourth verse based on the *Rahao* Verse:

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥
ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥ ੪ ॥ *Aant Kaal Jo
Mandir Simrey Aisee Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Preyt
Joan Val Val Autrey.*

Meaning: Should Human Life be spent in contemplation of one's property, spiritual death occurs in such focus and contemplation. (Spiritual death occurs under the influence of collecting possessions because) it's a life lived in the cycle of demonic traits.

What is the meaning of living the life of demonic traits? We have a verse on Page 1131 of the SGGS that answers that question.

ਭੈਰਉ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥ ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਤ ਜਿਨੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਪਛਾਤਾ
ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਪਰਮ ਹੰਸ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ *Bhairon Mehla 3. Kal
Meh Preyt Jinee Ram Na Pchata Satjug Param
Hans Bichari.*

Meaning: Not realizing that the Creator is within and never discoursing to elevate life to higher pedestals is to be demonic.

Now let's interpret the fifth and final verse based on the *Rahao* Verse:

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ
॥ ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਪੀਤੰਬਰੁ ਵਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਦੈ
ਬਸੈ ॥ ੫ ॥ ੨ ॥ *Aant Kaal Narayan Simrey Aisee
Chinta Meh Jey Mrey. Badt Tilochan Tay Nur
Mukta Pitambar Va Kay Ridey Bsey.*

Meaning: Should Human Life (ANTT KAAL, the final opportunity to realize God) be spent in contemplation of the Creator, and should one die from worldly desires, Tirlochan says doing so offers freedom (from undue focus on material, carnal pleasures, offspring, property, possessions) and invites the Creator to reside within one's thoughts.

CONCLUSIONS.

This article has attempted to seek a translation of Bhagat Tirlochan's *shabd* that is based on ਤੱਤ ਗੁਰਮਤ (*Tatt Gurmat*) - a translation that is in line with overall Gurmat and Gurbani philosophy . It is an attempt to derive at a translation that is meaningful and practical in our spiritual discoveries based on the SGGS.

The Overall messages of the *Shabd* are

1) Should we choose to contemplate and Focus on MATERIAL and CARNAL desires, our spiritual life DEGRADES into negative traits and characteristics. In other words spirituality DIES within us

2) We should Contemplate and Focus on Godly Virtues (*Gobind Naam*) constantly with a view towards realizing and becoming these virtues. (This is captured by the *Rahao* verse)

3) We should live these Godly Virtues as we walk our spiritual journey as human beings

In conclusion the following two points may be of help.

One, there is no *shabd* in Gurbani that contradicts another elsewhere. There is no verse that contradicts another. Nothing in Gurbani is contradictory to itself.

The principle is that ALL of Gurbani is constant, complimentary and woven in one thread of thought called Gurmat. All 35 contributors of the SGGS have the same spiritual messages. They are always on the same page.

Be it Bani of Baba Fareed – who wrote Bane in the 1200s or Guru Tegh Bahadur ji who composed Bane 500 years later), the spiritual principles remain the same and constant.

It follows therefore that the translation or interpretation of the above mentioned *shabd* on page 526 must also be understood using the principles of Gurbani, not ideas from other mythological sources.

Two, Gurbani recognizes us as human beings or spiritual beings based solely upon our thoughts, mindsets and everyday actions of the being, not our physical traits.

If our thoughts and actions are elevated; we are worthy of being called human. If they are not, then even if we are physical human, our spiritual character is not human.

It is our character, traits and behaviors in our temporal and spiritual lives that becomes illustrative of a variety of animal forms. This is how the concept of *Joon* is captured in Gurmat. It is innovative, unique and novel. It reflects the spiritual depths of the 35 composers of Gurbani within the SGGS

This is because SIKHI is a spirituality of the HERE and NOW.

IT is NOT a spirituality that is obsessed with what happens to us after death. The *Shabd* that we have discussed is about living life *Here and Now* in the remembrance of the Creator and in the internalization of His virtues.

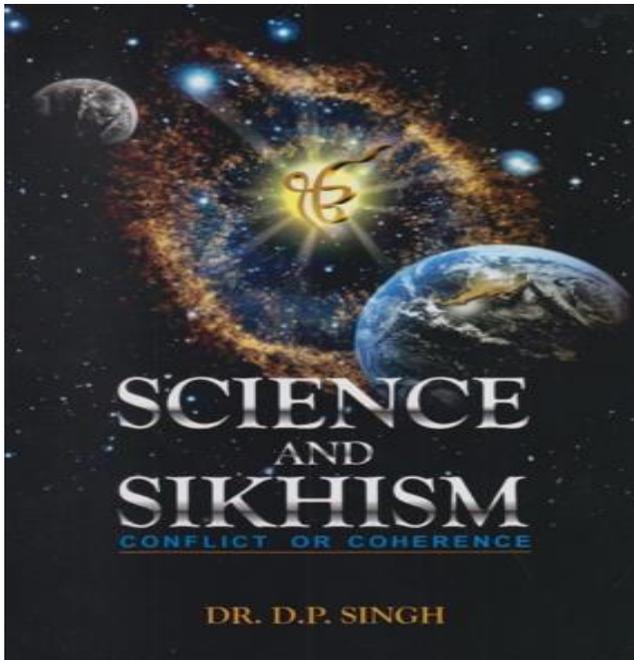
The Author can be contacted at dhillon99@gmail.com

A video version of this article is available here: <http://www.sikhvicharforum.org/2017/12/18/the-aant-kaal-myth-demolished-via-gurbane-of-sggs-dr-karminder-singh/>

BOOK REVIEW

Science and Sikhism. Conflict or Coherence (Anthology of Essays on Various Concepts in Sri Guru Granth Sahib).

By Harbans Lal, Ph.D.; D.Litt. (Hons).



WHEN I received the newly published book my first reaction was, oh' another book on a subject which so many have already written about. Earlier, even I had written a lengthy treatise on the subject. Therefore, who wants to read on this subject again?

I found the book very different than other books with similar titles that I had read before. As a matter of fact, I find the book title deceptive in that the book does not go into a justification of science and religion existing side by side, as most books do. Instead, the new book visions the Divine, the Creation, the religion, and its practices today through the eye of a scientist.

When Guru Nanak came out of his long trance at the banks of Vein rivulet in Northern India, he told those waiting for his return from his trance that he had a unique type of vision. That vision inspired him further to share with the world the wisdom he received during his trance. Also, he revealed a new symbol to represent his Divine. This symbol we now know as Ek Onkar, simply translated – One virtual reality manifested in all creations. Guru Nanak further prophesized that humanity would achieve the purpose of their living on this earth through an uninterrupted relationship with this

virtual reality through observing, connecting, and relating to the reality all around.

The relationship of the human intellect with that Virtual Reality may be achieved by a vast variety of tools, and science is one such tool. And that is the path the author takes in this new book. He defines a Sikh, Gurmat or the religion of the Sikhs, through the eyes of a scientist.

Since the Sikhs are those who seek the required wisdom through the hymns embodied in the Guru Granth, the author so defined Sikhs as all those seeking the ultimate and the awesome wisdom. When one goes further into it, one finds that there are diverse ways that lead to the same goal including the pathways of the same inquiry the scientist takes. The organizational part of the Sikhs is only formulating the path that is fitting within a culture, and science is the one discipline of that culture. Such an approach may be described with a beautiful parable – “We cannot stop the winds, but we can adjust our wings if we are so taught.” Yes, the Guru Granth prepares us to respect all adjustments that civil societies apply to their wings. The discipline of science teaches one such change, and the current book illustrates it amply.

Thus, even when Sikhism may be known as an organized religion, it does not require that one adheres to the organizational walls. That is how we remember Guru Nanak as Jagat Guru, meaning the one to shine over the whole world and not limited to any culturally or geographically defined community.

In this short review, I will not go into the definitions and formats of “Wisdom.” Human history is replete with examples how people in various cultural and various national boundaries successfully conceptualized and defined wisdom. It is perhaps this aspect that led the author to dedicate the book to “Inquisitive Human Mind.”

The real subject of this book is how the authors of the Guru Granth imparted the wisdom to its

adherents; who become the Sikhs, meaning the seekers of the wisdom embedded in the verses of the Guru Granth. Among them are scientists. The author who himself spent his life as a professional scientist made it more accessible in the lingua-franca of a scientist to seek the Wisdom of the Guru Granth. In the new book, it is through the eye of a scientist that one looks at the Sikh theology. Such an approach though vital in the digital age has been neglected among the Sikh masses and even in Sikh scholars. The author very wisely undertook to make up for this weakness in our community.

To judge the extent of the new book, it may be best to list all the Sections that comprised the book. This way you may get a bird's eye view of the book.

The book is organized into many sections and subsections.

The section on Religion, Science, and Mankind is divided into subsections into Misconceptions, Transitions, Awakening, and Coherence. The Section on Sri Guru Granth Sahib: A Universal Perspective is subdivided into subsections on, Universal World View, Egalitarian Social Order, Eternal Ethics, Harmony with Nature, Search for Truth, and World Peace. The Section on Guru Nanak's Teachings: A Scientific Perspective, is divided into sections such as Search for Truth, Search for Spiritual Knowledge, Keen Observer, Advocating Universal Egalitarianism, Exposing Taboos and Shams, Debunking Futile Rituals, Confronting Vain Practices, Censuring Dogmas, Challenging Superstitious Customs, and Denouncing Stereotypes.

Next Section on Sunn (Primal Void): Nothing or Everything? is sub-sectioned into The Void, Sunn: The Primal Void, Sunn and Creation, Sunn and the Modern Physics, Sunn: Creator and the Annihilator, and, Sunn Samadhi: The Way to Perceive Ultimate Reality.

The Section on Creation of Universe: A Fabulous Tale, is divided into subsections, Before Creation – Birth of the Universe, – Process of Creation,

– Time of Creation, – Vastness, – Origin of Life, –Diversity of Life, – Earth's Support in Space. – Ultimate Fate of the Universe: Dead End or Recreation.

The Section on Panch Tattva: The Five Classical Elements, is sub-sectioned into – Five: A Special Number, – Element: Meaning of the Term, – Five Classical Elements in Various Religions, – 'Panch Tattva' in Gurbani, and Scope and Significance, – Panch Tattva: The Essence of Life, – Panch Tattva and Spirituality, – Lessons from Panch Tattva, and – Conclusion.

The Section on Kudrat (Nature) in Guru Nanak's Holistic Vision is sub-sectioned into – Nature, – Primal Cause, – Time of Creation, – Vastness, – Diversity of Life. – Working of Nature, – Wonders of Nature. Nature and Divinity, – Nature and Spirituality, and – Nature and Humanity.

The Section on Sun: An Enigmatic Star, is sectioned into, – Sun: A Physical Body, – Creation of Sun, –Role of Sun, – Sun: As Metaphor, – Sun: As Metaphor for Lamp, – Sun: As Metaphor for Divine Light, –Sun: As Metaphor for Spiritual Enlightenment, – Sun: As Metaphor for Maya, – Sun: As Metaphor for Narhi (Sun Channel), – Lessons from the Sun, – Conclusion.

The Section on Earth: A Great Mother, is divided into – Earth: A Physical Body, – Creation of Earth, –Prime Cause, – Process of Creation, – Earth: A part of Nature, – Earth: Bonding the Fire and Water Together – Earth and Natural Law (Hukam) – Earth's Support in Space – Earth: Geographical Changes – Earth's Seasons – Wonders of Earth – Earth's Impermanence – Numerous Earths – Earth: A Great Mother –

Earth and Spirituality – Earth: A Metaphor for Human Body – Lessons from Earth – Pollution on Earth – Sustainability: Need of the Hour.

The Section on Moon is subdivided between Moon: An Esoteric Neighbour – Moon: A Physical

Body –Creation – Role of Moon – Moon: As Metaphor – Moon: As Metaphor for Lamp – Moon: As Metaphor for Divine – Moon: As Metaphor for Spiritual Enlightenment – Moon: As Metaphor for Narhi (Moon Channel) – Lessons from Moon.

The Section on Lotus: A Mystical Flower is sub-sectioned as – Lotus: A Unique Flowering Plant – Uniqueness of Lotus and Gurbani – Lotus in Indian Mythology – Lotus in various Religions and Cultures – Significance of Lotus – Lotus: A Metaphor for Exquisite Divine Beauty – Lotus: A Metaphor for Detachment – Lotus: A Metaphor for Manmukh and Gurmukh – Lotus: A Metaphor for Eternal Peace and Salvation – Be a Lotus.

The Section on Flowers: Mysterious Messengers is subdivided into – Flowers: Exquisite Beauty and Fragrance – Creation of Flowers – Flowers' Perpetuation – Flowers as a Metaphor – Flowers: A Metaphor for Divine – Flowers: A Metaphor for Dharma (Righteous Action) – Flowers: A Metaphor for 'To Blossom Forth' – Flowers: A Metaphor for 'Futile Life' – Flowers: A Metaphor for 'Impermanence' – Lessons from Flowers.

The Section on Basant (Spring): The Splendour of Nature, is subdivided into – Spring celebrations in different Cultures – Basant as a Metaphor – Basant: 'A Season' – Basant: A Raga (Melodic Modes) – Basant: A metaphor for 'A State of Mind' – Basant: A metaphor for 'To Dwell' – Basant: A metaphor for 'Springtime' – Basant: A metaphor for 'Divine' – Welcoming Spring in Our Life.

The Section on Wismad (Wonderful Bliss): A Transcendental Experience is sub-sectioned into Wismad –Physical Wismad – Meta-Physical Wismad – Mystical Wismad – Wismad: The Pinnacle of Spiritual Experience.

The Section on Impermanence: The Path to Liberation has divided into Understanding Impermanence – Impermanence and Change – Impermanence and Human Life – Impermanence and Attachment –Impermanence

and Worldly Passions – Impermanence and Renunciation – Impermanence: The Path to Liberation – From Impermanence to Permanence.

The Section on Ecological Concerns in Sri Guru Granth Sahib in divided into – Grave Crisis – Interdependence – Nature: A Spiritual Guide – Harmony with Nature – Earth: A Dharamsala – World Society – Prudent Life-Style – Integrated Approach to Sustainability.

The Section on Interdependence: Imperative for Twenty-First Century is divided into – Interdependence in Nature – Interdependence of Body and Universe – Global Interdependence – Interdependence Sustainability: Need of the Hour.

The Section on Relevance of Guru Granth Sahib in Twenty-First Century is divided into – Environmental Concerns – Menace of Corruption – Drug Abuse and Aids – War, Terrorism, and World Peace

The Section on Peaceful Co-existence and Role of Sikhs is divided into – Co-existence – Types – Need –Fostering Co-existence – Role of Religion – Role as an Individual – Role as a Family Member – Role as a Community Member – Relations with Other Communities – Role at National and International level – Role at Universal Level – Role of Sikh Organizations/Institutions – Conclusion.

The Section on Religious Experience in Science is divided into subsections as – Religion and the Scientists – Synthesis of Religion and Science – Religious Spirit of Science – Religiousness: An Indispensable Condition – Congruence of Religion and Science – Scientists and the Religious Experience – Science and Divinity.

The final Section is on Interpreting Gurbani: Formulating a Methodology 316-334. This Section is divided into – Hermeneutics: The Basics – Gurbani Hermeneutics – Various Schools of Gurbani Interpretation – The Principles of Gurbani Interpretation – Some Common Exegetical Fallacies, and Conclusion.

There needs no convincing on the width and breadth of coverage attempted in the book. At the same time, the author does not subject the reader with a bombastic style. He writes in simple English but sticks closely to the evidence with full citations and references.

The book is recommended to both the public and the scholars. It will be particularly useful to Sikhs katha-kars (preachers) undertaking Gurbani exegesis in English, or the Sikh millennials organizing discussion groups using English as their medium of discussion. The book dwells on many metaphors often used in Guru's hymns. This is a big plus.

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Harbans Lal, Ph.D.; D.Litt. (Hons)

Professor Emeritus & Chairman, Dept of
Pharmacology & Neurosciences, University of
North Texas Health Science Center.
Professor Emeritus, Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar, India.

President, Academy of Guru Granth Studies.

web: <https://seekingwisdomblog.wordpress.com>

m

email: Japji2050@gmail.com

KNOWING & IMPROVING SELF

We are not just a meaningless fragment in an alien universe for a certain time suspended between birth and death. It is not a bunch of few short pleasures followed by pain and ultimate annihilation. Our body is an outer shell to protect and experience an ocean of truth, love, intellect, energy, wisdom, information, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, contentment, service, effort etc. sometimes even anger anxiety difficulties, which are to be faced positively.

Nature has provided us bundle of Energy & Intellect to do something meaningful and contribute to this universe. It has given us this life and also provided all our needs for the life journey. Just think of air, water, heat and other products provided in the environment for which we pay nothing. Without all of these we can't accomplish anything.

Key to happiness is to understand these invaluable gifts and learn how to use and keep them pure and stable. Remember for happiness we must use this energy & intellect to love and help people in our surroundings. How to use breath to go into our body. When you find mind is very active and you feel that taking attention away from it is impossible, then take a few long breaths and feel the stomach coming in and out. After 10-15 breaths you will feel going to inner body and away from mind. You will be now in the ocean of consciousness. Even if mind is still active it will turn into a creative mind.

Art of listening:

When listening to another person, don't just listen with mind only but listen with whole body. Feel what is happening to inner energy field. Take away attention from thinking and create a still space that enables you to truly listen without the interference of mind. That emptiness gives space to the person whom we are listening. Giving space means absorbing and creating relationship. It becomes body interaction rather than mind interaction.

We must live life being full-filled with love, service and action, feeling fearless without jealousy in given environment. What is environment? It is weather, society, family, political, social and financial conditions in which we are living. Environment is our luck but still best results depend upon our decisions, efforts, and attitude within that environment. Persistent effort and positive mental attitude are the key to our happiness and success. Without persistent effort and positive mental attitude, we will feel guilty of not trying.

In humanity individuals differ only a little in Energy & Knowledge but major difference is desire & efforts to do things; to learn how to pass through negative and difficult moments. We know will power in individuals differs. Remember virtues, values, information, truth, love, positivity, discipline all help to improve our will power. Always remember we can only become who can be loved but we can't force others to love us. So, keep moving with your best effort.

Contributed by Parminder Parmar, Mississauga, Canada