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## Aggression invites God's Wrath!

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥ ਆਪੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ  
॥ ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥੧॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ  
ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥ ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ  
ਕਾਈ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਜੋੜਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੨॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ ਵਡਾ ਸਾਦ ਕਰੇ  
ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣੇ ॥

ਖਸਮੈ ਨਦਰੀ ਕੀੜਾ ਆਵੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਚੁਗੈ ਦਾਣੇ ॥ ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥੩॥

[SGGS: 360]

### Translation

He (Babur, the Mughal) occupied Khorasan and subdued Hindustan.

God: Consider, what calamity befell India – when the Mughal invaded (peaceful India) like the Doom?

Seeing such suffering and wailing, Didn't it move You, O Lord?

You are the singular Creator of us all. If an aggressor were to attack an invader, I would not complain. (pause)

But when a fierce Lion mauls a herd of unwary cattle, The Master must take the blame.

The hounds have ruined the gem of my country, When they die, none will ever mourn them.

\* Tr. based on Kartar Singh Duggal's *The Word Divine: GURUVAK* (with inputs from Ed. SR August marks the blood-stained Partition of India in 1947.

## ‘Sikhi Sikhia Gur Vichaar’: Discourse in Sikhism True Learning comes from Gurus’ Divine Message!

INDER MOHAN SINGH AND GURINDER PAL SINGH\* (USA)

SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB is unique among the Scriptures of the world in the universality and timelessness of its message. Written hundreds of years ago, it remains as fresh and meaningful today, across the world, as it was in India at the time of the Gurus.

Today, as growing numbers of Sikhs practice their faith around the Globe in a variety of social and cultural environments, it continues to be the centerpiece of all religious practices and the source of spiritual and moral inspiration.

To take full advantage of this great treasure, however, one needs to go beyond the traditional approach to **Gurbani**, such as *Matha Tekna*, *Parkash*, *Hukam*, *Sukhasan*, and *Akhand Path*. We need to understand, study and reflect on the words, and to apply these in our lives.

The Gurus brought the Divine message to us in the language of the people

instead of a scholarly language like Sanskrit to make it directly accessible by all. However, a large part of the message is about deep spiritual truths, which transcend human language (*akath kathaa* or the inexpressible story). Thus the mystical poetry of Gurbani makes copious use of analogies, metaphors and allegories, as well as numerous references to the prevailing Hindu mythology as also to Islamic practices, to communicate its deeper message. Gurbani itself encourages us to use our discriminating intellect (*bibek budhi*) and to study and reflect on its message as in ‘*Sikhi sikhia gur vichaar*’ [Guru Nanak, SGGs: 465]

Since the time of the Gurus there has been the tradition of *kathaa* and *vyaakhya*, to explain, discuss and elaborate on the text to help the devotees get the most from Gurbani.

Today, the language of **Gurbani** is no longer the current spoken language even

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in Punjab. Here in America and elsewhere, the local language — English in this case — is even further removed from the language of Gurbani. The mythological references and metaphors used in Gurbani are also increasingly unfamiliar to readers outside India. In spite of heroic efforts of Sikh parents and many progressive Gurdwaras to teach Punjabi to Sikh children, understanding the text of the Guru Granth Sahib can be challenging.

The **Chardi Kalaa Foundation** has been organizing monthly Gurbani Vichar programs in San Jose in California (USA) over the last five years to address this need. The objective is to study, learn and discuss **Gurbani**, and related issues in a group setting, where participants share their thoughts, opinions and experiences and learn from each other. The meetings are recorded and the videos are made available on the web at [www.chardikalaa.com](http://www.chardikalaa.com).

The Sikh Gurdwara San Jose, in keeping with its location in Silicon Valley, often called the Innovation Capital of the World, has been a leader in innovative educational and cultural programs that go beyond the traditional Gurdwara services. Twenty five years ago it pioneered one of the first Sunday Khalsa School programs (now named as Guru Nanak Khalsa School) to educate children in Punjabi and Sikhi, which has grown to be the largest such program in North

America with enrollment of over 700 students. A new building of the Gurdwara Sahib, in a scenic setting, was inaugurated in 2011 which included fourteen well equipped class rooms and a library for the educational activities.

The Gurdwara managing committee decided to celebrate the first Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in a big way every year. In 2012, the Gurdwara, in collaboration with the Chardi Kalaa Foundation, organized a conference to provide alternative forum for understanding and reflecting on the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The papers at this conference, [some of which are included in this special issue] cover a wide range and bring out different aspects of Gurbani, and its application to many facets of our lives and experiences. The speakers included scholars as well as lay practitioners of **Sikhi**, sharing their understanding and knowledge. We hope that this conference would become an annual event.

The **Chardi Kalaa Foundation** and the Sikh Gurdwara, San Jose, are pleased to share the lectures presented at the conference and are thankful that **The Sikh Review** has made it possible. We hope that they would generate the same or higher level of discussion among the worldwide readership of **The Sikh Review** as they did at their presentation in California.

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## “ਜਨ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਆਏ”: Advent of the Saviour!

RANBIR SINGH SANDHU\*

THE TITLE OF THIS ESSAY, meaning “They came to benefit others” is taken from two lines in Sri Guru Granth Sahib that are sometimes used to eulogize pious Sikhs who lead their lives in complete submission to Guru and provide guidance to many others. These are:

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੁਹਰੂ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਨ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਆਏ ॥

ਜੀਅ ਦਾਨੁ ਦੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਇਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਲੈਨਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥੨॥ [SGGS: 749]

These lines appear on the front pages of biographies of Sant Attar Singh Ji and Sant Harnam Singh Ji. It is quite possible that these are used for other persons as well.

This essay seeks guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib to determine if the use of this quote from Sri Guru Granth Sahib in praise of Gursikhs we respect greatly is appropriate.

Here, Guru Sahib describes saints who have God’s<sup>2</sup> Name in their hearts as the fortunate ones. Guru Sahib goes on to express his admiration for them and his desire to serve them. He praises them as ‘true kings’ for being immersed in God’s love. He considers them as ones recognized by God as His own and wishes to God for the blessing of meeting them. To

merit such acclaim from Guru Sahib, these persons must necessarily be truly extraordinary.

Let us explain:

- Who are the people that are not subject to birth and death?
- Who can get people to engage in Bhagti – devotion to God?
- Who can unite a person with God?
- What is Par-upkaar and who are the persons who are Par-upkaari?

Finally, we consider the role of saintly persons who have dedicated their lives to serving Guru<sup>3</sup> and God, working for the good of all mankind, and providing guidance to many in leading fruitful lives.

### a. Beyond Birth and Death

Siri Guru Granth Sahib describes God as beyond birth and death. In “Mool Mantra”, God is stated to be “Ajooni”. Also:

\* ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

\* ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥੩॥

“... God is not subject to birth and death.

... May the tongue burn that describes God as subject to birth-cycle!

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Note: To view full text, readers may visit [www.chardikalaa.com](http://www.chardikalaa.com)

**Satguru is forever**, and not subject to cycle of birth and death. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, identifies Satguru with God. Satguru is assigned divine qualities. For example:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਓਹੁ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ  
ਸਮਾਇ ॥੧੩॥ [SGGS:759]

Satguru breaks the bondage of birth and death of people who come to his protection. For example:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਫੇਰੁ ਨ ਪਵੈ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ  
ਦੁਖੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ [SGGS:69]

“Meeting Satguru, one is rid of cyclical births and the pain of birth and death is ended.”

Also,

ਬਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਮਨੁਆ ਨਾ ਟਿਕੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੁਨੀ  
ਪਾਇ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਪੁਛੁ ਆਪਿ ਦਇਆਲ ਹੋਹਿ ਤਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ  
ਮਿਲਿਆ ਆਇ ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਲਾਹਿ ਤੂ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੁਖੁ  
ਜਾਇ ॥ ੧ ॥ [SGGS:313]

“... Without the Guru the mind is not at peace, and one repeatedly goes through the cycle of birth and death. If God Himself has mercy, Satguru comes and meets one. O Nanak you should praise the Naam (of God) so you are rid of the agony of birth and death.”

And,

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਕਾਟੇ ਗੁਰ ਬਚਨੀ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ  
ਸੰਕਟ ਦੁਆਰਾ [SGGS:717]

“... The cycle of birth and death has been terminated through Guru’s Word; never again shall I be at the gates of misery ...”

And,

ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਧੁਰਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ  
ਤਿਨ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਭਉ ਭਾਗਾ ॥ [SGGS:768]

“... Those who were so predestined met Guru: their fear of birth and death was gone...”

ਮਹਾ ਮੁਗਧ ਅਜਾਨ ਅਗਿਆਨੀ ਰਾਖੇ ਧਾਰਿ ਦਏ ॥  
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਭੇਟਿਓ ਆਵਨ ਜਾਨ  
ਰਹੇ ॥੨॥੧॥੧੨੬॥ [SGGS:829]

“... God saved us who are foolish, ignorant, without learning. O Nanak, say, we met the Perfect Guru and our coming and going was ended.”

Satguru helps people break the cycle of birth and death by uniting them with God. He could not be himself in that cycle if he is to liberate others from it. Thus, only God and Guru are beyond birth and death. All others are subject to birth and death until they are liberated through Guru’s advice and God’s mercy.

#### **b. The Gift of Bhagti/devotion:**

Siri Guru Granth Sahib tells us that without Guru’s teaching, Bhagti is impossible. Here, we present a few quotes:

ਹੋਰੁ ਕਿਤੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ  
ਉਪਦੇਸ ॥੧॥ [SGGS:21]

“... There is no other way to do Bhagti  
besides Satguru’s teaching ...”

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਜੇ ਲੋਚੈ ਸਭੁ  
ਕੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ [SGGS:32]

“... O Brother, without Guru there can  
be no devotion. Without Guru one  
cannot receive Bhagti even if every-  
one desires it. ...”

Sri Guru Granth Sahib tells us of the  
many blessings that Satguru bestows  
upon the seeker, in addition to ending the  
cycle of birth and death. These include  
the gift of Bhagti: For example:

ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਤ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜਿਤੁ  
ਮਿਲਿਆਐ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਸਾਤਿ ਆਈ ॥

ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਤ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜਿਤੁ  
ਮਿਲਿਆਐ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜਿਸ  
ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥

ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜਿਨਿ  
ਵੈਰੀ ਮਿਤੁ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਸਭ ਸਮ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

ਧਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਹਰਿ  
ਨਾਮ ਸਿਉ ਹਮਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਬਣਾਈ ॥ ੧੯ ॥  
[SGGS:594]

“Marvellous is our Satguru, the em-  
bodiment of Truth, meeting whom we  
received peace.

Marvellous is our Satguru, the em-  
bodiment of Truth, meeting whom we  
received God’s Bhagti.

Marvellous is our Satguru, God’s  
devotee, serving whom we got at-  
tached to Har Naam (God’s Name).

Marvellous is our Satguru, the learned  
one, who taught us to look upon  
friends and enemies the same way.

Marvellous is our Satguru, our friend,  
who got us to love God.”

And,

ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣਾ ਸਬਦਿ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ॥ ਸਰੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਖੈ  
ਉਰ ਧਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ  
ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥੫॥

ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੈ ਪਰਜ ਵਿਗੋਈ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ  
ਥਿਰੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ  
ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥੬॥ [SGGS:1069]

“... One gets rid of transmigration  
through the Word, through keeping  
the Eternal Naam in one’s heart.  
Through Guru’s teaching, controlling  
the mind, destroying self-will, one is  
absorbed in God. Through coming  
and going one loses one’s honor, with-  
out Satgur no one can be stable.  
Through the (Guru’s) Word one’s light  
merges with the divine light and one  
finds joy. ...”

The foregoing examples show clearly



that the gift of Bhagti can be received exclusively from the Guru. Without the Guru, there can be no Bhagti.

### c. Union With God

The primary purpose of human life is to understand Ultimate Reality. Siri Guru Granth Sahib teaches us that the Guru unites us with God. For example:

ਬੰਧਨ ਤੋੜਿ ਬੋਲਾਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ॥ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਲਾਗੈ  
ਸਾਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

ਮਿਟਹਿ ਕਲੇਸ ਸੁਖੀ ਹੋਇ ਰਹੀਐ ॥ ਐਸਾ  
ਦਾਤਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਸੋ ਸੁਖਦਾਤਾ ਜਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ  
ਤਿਸੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਮਿਲਾਵੈ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਜਿਸੁ ਹੋਇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਪਿ ਮਿਲਾਵੈ ॥  
ਸਰਬ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਤੇ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਆਪੁ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣਾ ॥ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ  
ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਗੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਣੀ  
ਸਾਚੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥

ਗੁਰਿ ਪੂਰੈ ਮੇਟਿਆ ਅੰਧਿਆਰਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ  
ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥੪॥੨੪॥੯੩॥

[SGGS:184]

“Breaking our bonds he gets us to recite God’s Name, in our minds we think of the Eternal, our anxieties are silenced and we stay happy; such a benefactor is called Satguru. The one who gets us to remember God’s Name and in his mercy gets us to unite with God, is the provider of hap-

piness. Towards whom God is merciful, God unites him with Himself; such a person receives all the treasures from the Guru. He gives up self-will, his coming and going is ended; in the Guru’s company he understands God.

One gets to love God, one’s living becomes pure and his lifestyle becomes truthful: the perfect Guru dispelled the darkness, Nanak’s God is boundless.”

From the above discussion, we conclude that the reference is to Guru who is not in the cycle of birth and death and has come to the world solely to benefit mankind through his teachings, giving them the gift of Bhagti, and uniting them with God.

### 3. The Gursikh

Guru Sahib, referring to devotees of God as Har Jan (God’s people), Sants, Gursikhs, Bhagats, Sevaks, etc., teaches us that they are blessed. They understand Ultimate Reality, devote themselves to thinking of and praising God and live truthful rewarding lives. Their lifestyle and relationship with the Guru is illustrated in the following:

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ਸੇ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਸਦਾ  
ਹਦੁਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਨ ਸਬਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਣਿ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਮਨਿ  
ਧਿਆਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਭਗਤੀ ਰਤਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ  
ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS:28]



“Those who through Guru’s wisdom understand God, always see Him present everywhere. ... Those who heard and accepted Guru’s Word remember God in their hearts. Always absorbed in Bhagti, their mind and body become pure. ... The efforts of those who are in Guru’s presence and whose hearts are pure are fruitful. They sing God’s praises, always read about Him, and singing His praises are absorbed in Him. O Nanak, the words of those who through the Naam are attached to God are always true.”

And,

ਆਵਹੁ ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੋ ਅਕਥ ਕੀ ਕਰਹ ਕਹਾਣੀ ॥  
ਕਰਹ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਅਕਥ ਕੇਰੀ ਕਿਤੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਪਾਈਐ ॥  
ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਉਪਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮਿ  
ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ [SGGS:918]

“Come, dear saints, let us tell the story of the Indescribable. Let us tell the story of the Indescribable and see where we can receive Him. We receive Him by offering our body, mind, and wealth to the Guru and carrying out his instructions. Accept Guru’s instruction and sing the True Word. Nanak says, listen O Sants, tell the story of the Indescribable.”

Siri Guru Granth Sahib teaches us about the relationship between these Sants and Satguru, their being Par-upkaari, and how should seekers regard them and benefit from their learning.

ਮੇਰੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਇ ਤੂੰ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਾ ਸੰਤ ਤੇਰੇ ॥  
ਤੇਰੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਭਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਮੁ ਨਹੀ  
ਆਵੈ ਨੇਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਜੋ ਤੇਰੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਨੁ ਕਾ ਜਨਮ  
ਮਰਣ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਾਸਾ ॥  
ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸ਼ ਨ ਮੇਟੈ ਕੋਈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਦਿਲਾਸਾ ॥੨॥  
ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸੁਖ ਫਲ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਆਠ ਪਹਰ  
ਆਰਾਧਹਿ ॥  
ਤੇਰੀ ਸਰਣਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਭਰਵਾਸੈ ਪੰਚ ਦੁਸਟ ਲੈ  
ਸਾਧਹਿ ॥੩॥ [SGGS:750]

“My beloved God, you belong to the Sant and Sants to you. Your devotee has no fear; death does not approach him. Birth and death have been destroyed for those who are imbued in your love. Your mercy cannot be erased by any one; Satguru has assured this. Those who remember Naam and think of You constantly receive the fruit of happiness. In Your protection and with Your support, the five evil ones (lust, anger, greed, attachment, and self-will) have been conquered. ...

#### **b. Par-upkaari: In Total Dedication**

These Sants, Gursikhs, living truthful lives in devoted service of Guru and God, are Par-upkaari. They not only reach liberation for themselves but also help others achieve it. For example:

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਸੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ॥  
[SGGS:263]

“ ... Those who remember Prabhu (God) are Par-upkaari. I would give my life for those who remember Prabhu. ...”

**c. Sants are worthy of honor for we can learn from them**

Siri Guru Granth Sahib teaches us to respect Gursikhs, seek their company and learn from them about Guru and God. For example:

ਆਇ ਮਿਲੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਆਇ ਮਿਲੁ ਤੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ  
ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਹਰਿ ਭਾਵਦੇ ਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ਪਾਏ ॥  
ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਭਾਣਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਘੁਮਿ ਘੁਮਿ  
ਜਾਏ ॥੨॥

ਜਿਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਉ  
ਹਉ ਵਾਰੀ ॥

ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਚਾਕਰੀ ਤਿਨ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ  
॥੩॥ [SGGS:726]

“Come and meet me O Gursikh; for you are dear to my Guru. God likes celebration of His attributes; I learnt about them from my Guru. I would sacrifice my life for those who have accepted what Guru likes. I would sacrifice myself for those who have seen my beloved Satguru; I would always sacrifice myself for those who serve my Guru.”

And,

ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਿਵਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਲਾਗਉ  
ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਆਖਾ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਜਣੁ ਦੇਹਿ  
ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਸੋਈ ਦਸਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੜਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਅਨਤ ਨ  
ਕਾਹੁ ਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਤੈ ਕੂੰ ਭੇਵਸਾ ਮੈ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ  
ਜੀਉ ॥

ਹਉ ਆਇਆ ਦੁਰਹੁ ਚਲਿ ਕੈ ਮੈ ਤਕੀ ਤਉ  
ਸਰਣਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਮੈ ਆਸਾ ਰਖੀ ਚਿਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਭੁ ਦੁਖੁ  
ਗਵਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥ [SGGS:763]

“If I were to meet a true devotee, I would bow to him and touch his feet. I would express the pain (of separation from God) in my heart and ask him to get me to meet Guru, my friend. (I would ask him to) give me the advice so my mind would not wander elsewhere. (I would say) I shall submit my mind to you; tell me the way (to meet God). I have come from afar and seek your help. I have hope in my heart that you will remove all my pain.”

**4. CONCLUSION**

The discussion of various quotes and a look at references from Sri Guru Granth Sahib leads us to the conclusion that the scripture:

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਦੁਹੁ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਨ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ  
ਆਏ ॥

ਜੀਅ ਦਾਨੁ ਦੇ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਇਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ  
ਲੈਨਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥੨॥ [SGGS:749]

Relates to Guru, for God and Guru are the only ones beyond birth and death, capable of bestowing devotion and divine love upon people, and able to unite people with God.

However, there can be devotees who, through their saintly lifestyle and constant devotion to Guru and God, have been

blessed with Bhagti and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Whereas it would clearly be incorrect to go overboard in our admiration for them, and to use the above quote to describe them, they are to be respected. We should seek their company and value their advice. With the help of the true devotees these 'dedicated brides', we would learn about Guru and, receiving Naam from Him, could receive God in our hearts.



### References

1. Numerals in brackets at the end of a quote refer to page number in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, 1430 page version, published by Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. Translations are by this writer.
2. In this essay, we use the word "God" to represent the Sikh concept of Ultimate Reality.
3. The words Guru and Satguru are used interchangeably in Siri Guru Granth Sahib and in this essay as well.
4. Sohaagan or Suhaagan = Subhaagan means a fortunate woman; also, a happily married bride. Gur Sahib likens a human soul united with God to a fortunate woman happily married to Eternal God, her loving husband forever.

For want of space, only the abridged versions of seminar papers have been published in this issue. To view full text, readers may visit [www.chardikalaa.com](http://www.chardikalaa.com)

- Publisher

## Guru Nanak's Doctrine of *Naam*

DR. JASWANT SINGH NEKI\*

**NAAM** IS THE PIVOTAL DOCTRINE OF the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Nanak, emphasized its significance when he said:

ਨਾਨਕ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮੁ ।

In the House of Nanak,  
If there is any *one* thing, it is *Naam*.  
[SGGS:1136]

The great significance of this term in the Sikh doctrine can be appreciated from the fact that in the form of its various derivatives\* this term occurs over six thousand times in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This is far more numerous than any other doctrinal term.

*Naam* is also considered to be the summit of all doctrines:

ਸਗਲ ਮਤਾਂਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ।

The essence of all doctrines is subsumed in *Naam*. [SGGS: 296]

That is why the Sikh way of life is called *Naam Marga* or the highway to *Naam*.

The Panjabi term *Naam* is the adaptation of the Sanskrit word *Naamn*, which etymologically is considered to have been derived from two disparate claimant roots *mna* and *nam*. *Mnaa* means 'to remember' and *nam* means 'to address'. The two roots are not really antithetical, but es-

entially complementary. Thus, *Naam* means that by which one remembers or (alternately,) addresses someone. In this sense, it has been said to mean 'name' and employed in *Gurbani* (the Gurus' utterance as compiled in the *Guru Granth Sahib*) to denote the Name of God

God, in reality, has no name. Yet, He is considered to possess innumerable names. In fact, he is remembered by His attributive names – names given by man according to his understanding. Each one of these, individually, at best, represents a single aspect of the Supreme Reality. No one, perhaps, has known the Supreme reality comprehensively. If one has, at all, known, he/she has not communicated it to other men.

Hence, man has, of necessity, to fall back upon attributive names in order to remember God.

According to *Gurbani*, if there is any Primordial Name of God, it is *Sati* (sit) and *Sati* means 'is-ness' or existence. So *Sati* connotes an affirmation and assertion of God's existence. One also comes by *Sati* and *Naam* together as *Sati-Naam* in *Gurbani* a number of times. This form has been prescribed for repetitive recitation for practicing the presence of God.

- The various derivative terms of NAAM

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are naamaa, naamah, naamaih, naamahu, naamam, naamai, naame, naamo, naamu, naamuo, naae, naaon, naav, naavai, naave etc

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru in one of his writings salutes God as *anaame*, meaning 'without any name'.

ਅਸਿਖ ਨਾਵ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ. [SGGS: 4] ਸ੍ਰਬ ਨਾਥ  
ਅਨੇਕੈ ਨਾਉ [SGGS: 536]

ਤਵ ਸਰਬ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਕਵਨ ਜਪੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਕ੍ਰਿਰਤਮ  
ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੇਭਾ । ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ  
ਪੂਰਬਲਾ । [SGGS: 1083]

**NAAM** as the nouminous substratum of Creation:

According to Sikh cosmological thought, *Naam* is the underlying cause as well as the fundamental foundation of Creation. In the opening *pauri* (stanza) of *Aasaa ki Vaar*, Guru Nanak pithily describes his views on cosmogony and cosmology. He says:

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ।  
ਦੁਜੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਚਾਓ ।  
ਦਾਤਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਤੂੰ ਤੁਸਿ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਸਾਓ ।  
ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣੇਈ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇ ਲੈਸਹਿ ਜਿੰਦੁ ਕਵਾਓ ।  
ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਚਾਓ ।

You Created Yourself and then assumed Your *Naam*.

In the second place, You fashioned the Creation,  
And seated within it, beheld it with

delight. [SGGS: 463]

The above stanza, first of all, informs us about what antedates Creation. It is God who created Himself – in other words, He is uncreated by any agency other than Himself. In the second place, He fashioned the Creation. However, prior to Creation, the Creator assumed His *Naam* that was not apart from God, but He Himself with the creative intent. *Naam*, thus, seems to imply His Creative Will that is not apart from Himself but an integral aspect of His Being. In other words, it stands for His urge to transform Being into Becoming and thus signifies Divine Creativity.

In the sixteenth stanza of Japu ji, Guru Nanak informs us that God fashioned all His Creation by uttering one single Word. That caused a million processes to roll out.

- Guru Gobind Singh, in Jaap Sahib, testifies that God “pervades here, there and everywhere as Love”.

ਜਤੁ ਤਤੁ ਦਿਸਾ ਵਿਸਾ ਹੁਇ ਫੈਲਿਓ ਅਨੁਰਾਗ ॥  
ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਓ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਓ । ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਓ ।

Guru Arjun Dev, in Sukhmani Sahib, testifies that *Naam* sustains and supports the entire Creation.

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ. ੫  
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥  
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥

Supported by *Naam* all creatures exist.  
The *Naam* is the support of the world and the universe.

Simrities, Vedas and Puranas, rest on *Naam*.

*Naam* is the support of heavens and nether-worlds.

All embodiments rest on *Naam*.

[SGGS: 284]

Since *Naam* appears between self-created God and God-created Creation, this might signify the three ways of Brahman, viz. *Nirguna nirankar*, *Saguna nirankar* and *saguna sakar*. *Naam* seems to stand for Saguna Nirankar. A number of passages in *Gurbani* seem to support this proposition. For example:

ਇਐ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਉਐ ਸਰਗੁਨ ਕੇਲ ਕਰਤ ਬਿਬ  
ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰਾ ॥

Here You are the Absolute Formless Lord,

Hereafter, You are the Lord of Form,  
You play it both ways, O my Master.

[SGGS:827]

Between the muttered and the uttered thought seems to exist the state of intent or will. *Naam* may well be that Divine Will that is responsible not only for the Creation, but also for the multiform processes that have been unrolled with it. The Creator does not desert the Creation after the initial act, but pervades it and continues to support and conserve it from within. He feels delighted seeing His Creation work so perfectly well. This is His wonderful play (*kel*), His mysterious sport (*choj*).

Thus, *Naam* is essentially what underlies phenomena, its numinous substratum. It is the Essence, shorn of phenomenon, or *Maya*. *Maya* is also called *Anjan*. Hence *Naam* is also called *Naranjan*. There are many verses in the holy Granth Sahib wherein *Naam* is described as *Niranjan*, for example:

ਐਸਾ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਨਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਮਨਿ ਕੋਇ ॥

Such is the *Naam* immaculate, only one with faith knows of it. [SGGS: 3]

ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਰਵਿਆ ਸਭ ਲੋਈ ॥

The *Naam* of the immaculate Lord is all pervading, permeating everywhere. [SGGS: 1242]

**This, then, is *Naam*, the sublime base of all that exists.**

**NA\_M** is the pivotal doctrine of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Nanak, emphasized its significance when he said:

ਨਾਨਕ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

In the House of Nanak,  
If there is any *one* thing, it is *Na\_m*.

[SGGS:1136]

The great significance of this term in the Sikh doctrine can be appreciated from the fact that, in the form of its various derivatives, this term occurs over six thousand times in the holy *Granth Sahib*, the Word-Guru' of the Sikhs. This is much more

numerous than any other doctrinal term.

*Na\_m* is also considered to be the summit of all doctrines:

The essence of all doctrines is subsumed in *N\_am*. [SGGS:296]

That is why the Sikh way of life is called *Na\_m Ma\_rga* or the Path of *Na\_m*.

The Panjabi term *Na\_m* is the adaptation of the Sanskrit word *Na\_mn*, which etymologically is considered to have been derived from two disparate claimant roots *mna* and *nam*. *Mna\_* means 'to remember' and *nam* means 'to address'. The two roots are not really antithetical, but are essentially complementary. Thus, *Na\_m* means that by which one remembers or (alternately,) addresses someone. In this sense, it has been said to mean 'name' and employed in *Gurba\_ni\_* (the Gurus' utterance as compiled in the Guru\_Gran>th Sa\_hib) to denote the Name of God.

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According to *Gurba\_ni\_*, if there is any Primordial Name of God, it is *Sati* and *Sati* means 'is-ness' or existence. So *Sati* connotes an affirmation of God's existence.

One also comes by *Sati* and *Na\_m* together as *Sati-Na\_m* in *Gurba\_ni\_* a number of times. This form has been prescribed for repetitive recitation for practicing the presence of God.

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The above verse also informs us that God as *Na\_m* came to pervade the Cre-



ation. He does so along with His creativity as *Na\_m*. This verse also furnishes us with the Divine Reason for Creation. It was His desire to give out His Love. For God is Love, He was impelled to dole out His Grace. Hence He created the universe. His Love was thus His intent for Creation. *Na\_m*, thus signifies His loving intent for creation. And since He pervades His Creation as *Na\_m*, He pervades it as Love:

Since *Naam* appears between self-created God and God-created Creation, this might well be signifying the three ways of Brahman viz. *Nirgun<a niran>ka\_r*, *Sagun>a niran>ka\_r* and *sagun>a sa\_ka\_r*. *Na\_m* seems to stand for *Sagun<a niran>ka\_r*. A number of passages in *Gurban>i* seem to support this proposition:

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Such is the *Na\_m* immaculate, only one with faith knows of it.  
[SGGS: 3]

In every heart is the *Na\_m* immaculate of my Lord and Master.  
[SGGS:229]

Nothing else would I ask of my God, but to be blessed by the Love of immaculate *Na\_m*. [SGGS:504]

The *Na\_m* of the immaculate Lord is all pervading, permeating everywhere. [SGGS: 1242]

This, then, is *Na\_m*, the sublime basis of all that exists.

ਨਾਮ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ । ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮਹਤਾ ਪੁਰ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦੇਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ' ਨਾਨਕ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮੁ ।  
[SGGS:1136]

*Naam* is considered to be the summit of all doctrines:

ਸ਼ਗਲ ਮਤਾਂਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ।

The essence of all doctrines is subsumed in *Naam*. [SGGS: 296]

**That is why the Sikh way of life is called *Naam Maarga* or the Path of *Naam*.**

The Panjabi term *Naam* is the adaptation of the Sanskrit word *Naamn*, which etymologically is considered to have been derived from two disparate claimant roots *mna* and *nam*. *Mnaa* means 'to remem-

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ਨਾਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਇ ਲਇਐ ਨਕ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ।  
ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ ।  
ਨਾਇ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਪਤਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਚੁ ਸੂਤੁ ।

#### The 'Noumenal' Substratum of Creation:

Noumenal is the adjectival form of noumenon; and noumenon is a term that signifies a contrast to phenomenon. Phenomenon means appearance, an object of experience perceived by the senses. In principle, phenomenon differs from noumenon which remains beyond the bonds of experience and is inaccessible to human contemplation. It signifies the essence behind the phenomena. It is understood to mean reality as it exists in itself. **Emanuel Kant** examined noumenon in its two aspects. **First**, the negative or problematic aspect as an object of reason or intellectual intuition. **Second**, the positive aspect as an object of non-sensuous contemplation. In this sense, noumenon is inaccessible to man because his contemplation, at least according to Kant, can only be sensuous. Thus noumena are not themselves knowable.

However, even though inaccessible to speculative reason, the noumenal world of God, freedom and immortality can be apprehended through man's capacity for acting as a moral agent.

In this context, Kant's examination of the German term *Ding-an-sich* (thing-in-itself) may be relevant to consider. "As the sense... never... enables us to know things in themselves, but only their appearances, and as these are mere representations ... all bodies, together with the space in which they are, must be held to be nothing but mere representations in us, and exist nowhere else than merely in our thought.

In the light of the above consideration, we intend to examine the Sikh doctrinal term 'Naam' as a noumenal reality.

Naam, in Sikh theology is the basic cause and underlying support of all creation. In the very opening stanza (*pauni*) of his seminal work, *Asa-di-Var*, Guru Nanak pithily provides us remarkable insight into his views on Cosmogony and Cosmology. He says:

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥  
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਚਾਉ ॥  
[SGGS: 463]

He Himself created Himself; and Himself assumed His Naam.

Secondly, He fashioned the creation; seated within it, He beholds it with delight.



## Guru Granth and the Guru Panth!

I.J. SINGH\*

**Abstract** Barring minor schismatic sects, the global Sikh community accepts that, in A.D. 1708, Guru Gobind Singh Ji anointed the *Adi Granth* as the Guru Granth. Thus after ten generations of Gurus in human form – from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh — the mantle was passed to the written Word.

Historically, we rest our case for this on the 19<sup>th</sup> century *dohera* by Giani Gian Singh that is universally recited by Sikhs that goes “*Sabh sikhian ko hukam hae Guru manyo Granth.*” Yet, verses by Prehlad Singh that antedate Gian Singh’s writings speak of *Guru Panth*.

How do we reconcile the two? I would argue that the two are doctrinally consistent.

An intimately related question asks why Guru Gobind Singh did not nominate a successor Guru. Our tradition and history are clear that he did not. Yet, we also know the tradition of nominating a successor in human form started with Guru Nanak and continued until Guru Gobind Singh changed it – by a Divine edict.

We may not speculate but it is our onus to explore our history and the continuity of the Guru’s message for meaning in that essential change instituted by Guru Gobind Singh.

I aim to connect the Guru’s reasoning to **Sikhi** as an experiment in nation building that holds lessons for today.

History and tradition speak of Ten Gurus in human form who guided the Sikh faith and its development, starting with Guru Nanak in 1469 and culminating with Guru Gobind Singh in 1708.

Close to the end of his life, tradition and history tell us, Guru Gobind Singh decreed that the Word in the Guru Granth would henceforth be the spiritual Guru, while in matters temporal, authority would rest in the worldwide Sikh community acting together

in awareness of, and guided by, their spiritual heritage.

The question that I frame at this time lies at the heart of what Guru Granth means to us today: Despite the unbroken tradition that every one of the previous nine Gurus had followed, why did Guru Gobind Singh not nominate a Guru in human form to succeed himself?

I have heard reputable Sikh scholars and academicians assert - and most re-

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cently it was one who occupies an endowed chair of Sikh studies in North America - that it was because all four sons of the Guru had already been martyred; thus, there was just no suitable successor left.

I find such reasoning facile but false and unconvincing, even though Guruship did stay within one family for several generations. At the end of his earthly life, Guru Nanak nominated a devotee, Bhai Lehna, to succeed as Guru Angad, bypassing his own two sons. Similarly, Guru Angad nominated a follower, Amardas, to the office, not either of his own two sons. Surely the sons of the Gurus were available and hungering for the office but not found able to the task.

Guru Gobind Singh, too, could have surely found a Sikh to become the next Guru. There was sufficient precedence to do so. Why didn't he go that route?

We can't really 'second-guess' the Guru. So we are not likely to be able to settle the question, but let's explore it; the process can only help us think along some uncharted corridors of our rich history.

Let's us pause here to examine the matter.

The fact that the Holy Word (**shabd**) is paramount, not the human form of any Guru, becomes obvious from the reverence accorded to **Guru-Bani** by generations of Sikhs and Gurus themselves, ever since Guru Arjun first compiled the Adi Granth, which formed the major corpus of the Guru Granth. Sikh lore tells us that once the Adi Granth was collated, hence-

forth Guru Arjun ensconced it on a raised platform, or throne, and treated it with the utmost reverence.

Among many that are possible, I offer you only two brief citations from Guru Granth in support of my contention: "*Pothee pamesar ka thaan, sadh sung gaaveh gune Gobind pooran brahm gyan*" (SGGS: 1226), meaning that God is inherent as the Word in the Adi Granth, the precursor to the Guru Granth. Again, the Guru Granth says "*Banee guru guru hae banee vich banee amrit saray*" (SGGS: 982) -- **The Word is the manifest spirit of the Guru; The Guru is immanent in the Word.** In fact, one only needs to step methodically through the *Sidh Gosht* (SGGS: 938-941), a dialogue between Guru Nanak and the Yogic scholars of the time, to marvel at Guru Nanak's emphasis on **Shabd** - the Word as the only way to liberation.

The Gurus lived during colorful and dangerous times; two Gurus were martyred, as were the four sons of the Tenth Guru. Often, there were disagreements within the Gurus' family and strong internecine rivalry, particularly when a successor Guru was to be anointed, yet there is only minimal and passing reference to any of this history, if at all, in the Guru Granth.

The Gurus received respect and reverence as the carriers and channels for the message. But their private lives remained private.

The emphasis, thus, is not meant to be on the person of any Guru -- from Nanak to Gobind Singh -- but on the Word in the Guru Granth. As I say this, I must also concede that humans have very human needs, and so Sikhs worldwide seem to have created iconography and icons of worship out of the Gurus who were iconoclasts to the core.

Let us cast a very quick look at the Indian subcontinent and what it was like when the Gurus trod the earth.

India's Hindu religion has been internally divided by caste, and subjected to frequent invasions through the Khyber Pass and into Punjab. Many had used this gateway into India - from the Caucasians to Alexander the Great, the Mongols and Mughals - to stay, perish or return. The sea routes served trade, but attracted invaders late in history when the French, English, Portuguese and Dutch ventured forth.

It is the same path that continues to give America and NATO so much trouble these days.

The people of India, largely Hindu, were divided into a rigid hierarchy of the caste system. Low castes and women were disenfranchised beyond what we can imagine today. Islam was the politically dominant religion, with its emphasis increasingly on conversion of the natives to Islam -- willingly or otherwise. The person or property of a non-Muslim was not safe and he also paid regressive taxes just to exist. **Over the centuries, the natives of India had become inured to**

**being ruled either by the hierarchy of their own caste system or by invaders. Sikhi arose in the face of such turmoil.**

I would summarize the times in one sentence as one where when the Indian found himself between a rock and a hard place; caught betwixt a caste-driven Hindu society on one side and politically dominant Islam on the other that demanded conversion or death.

In creating **Sikhi**, the Gurus embarked on a critical experiment -- one of nation-building -- a nation with a spiritual core, but without political borders. What do a people yearn for or want?

**Some critical needs are:** A meaningful and positive message to shape righteous living (ethical framework) and a life of dignity with economic hope; an ethical framework and a way to fashion lives; a system of participatory self-governance that promises transparency and accountability where citizens have a stake in their own lives, and an internally consistent model of conflict resolution, so that a sense of fairness and justice prevail.

I know all this sounds like a tall order. A paradigm shift of such scale takes generations.

So, the Sikh Gurus built institutions to address these fundamental needs of a just and progressive society. Nation building at such a massive scale is not done overnight; the process took ten generations of Gurus and over two

hundred years to create an egalitarian society based on spiritual values.

And, during that time, ten Gurus from Nanak to Gobind Singh personally directed and nurtured the development of many model Sikh communities by founding several townships that became the infrastructure of Punjab and of the larger subcontinent.

I have addressed the development of Punjab's infrastructure by the Gurus in some detail elsewhere but, in brief, I remind you that Guru Nanak founded and nurtured Kartarpur for many years. Many flocked to it. It became a prosperous community of farmers and traders who lived the Sikh way of life. Guru Angad who followed Guru Nanak founded a new township at Khadur; that did not diminish Kartarpur of its glory but now added another township with a spiritually directed community to the nascent economic infrastructure of the land. Similarly for Guru Amardas and Goindwal, and the later development of Taran Taran, Ramdaspur, Amritsar Kiratpur, Hargobindpur, and finally Anandpur, Kesgarh, and others during the Guru period.

This is not a detailed or complete listing. It merely points out the deliberate efforts of the Gurus to awaken a sleeping nation while giving it a plan and hope by examples. Yes, I know that gurduara lectures often dwell on internecine rivalries as the driving force why each Guru went his separate way to found a new township but I think that's a misreading of history.

Think with me a moment. If the Gurus acted to sidestep familial disagreements there were only two options open to them. Either a departing Guru could ask the people in the town to stay there and make the best of it and that he was going elsewhere, or he could ask them to evacuate the town and come with him. The first case would be abandoning the Sikh community, the second alternative would leave the town desolate.

There is absolutely not an iota of evidence or even a suggestion that any Guru followed such a path. The impetus was development of the infrastructure of Punjab and the imperatives of nation building.

Two hundred years after Guru Nanak, the teachings had been collated in what was to become the Guru Granth - the repository of our entire spiritual heritage. The sapling of a nation planted by Guru Nanak had been nurtured over two centuries by exemplary gardeners - the ten Gurus. Solid self-reliant communities had been built. Institutions necessary to a free people were in place.

The institution of *langar* teaches equality and commitment to community service; gurdwara, or dhramsaal as it was likely called then, existed as a community center where people learned to appreciate each other and work collectively towards the community's goals; *meeri* and *peeri* were ideas joined at the hip so as to teach that our inner spiritual life is not to be sundered from our worldly lives; Akaal Takht



provided a venue for community issues and *gurmatta* was the way to resolve them. Every Guru from the sixth to the tenth maintained a functioning battle-tested army to safeguard our interests. Don't forget that the twice a year conclave of Sikhs at Vaisakhi and Diwali, that Guru Amardas initiated, were like national conclaves – precursors of the Sarbat Khalsa.

How do we know that the experiment of nation building was successful? How does a gardener know that the sapling he planted sometime ago now no longer needs a supporting shaft or a scaffolding to hold it up? How does a parent know that a child is ready and the apron strings should be cut?

Guru Gobind Singh set out to test the Sikhs on these questions when he put the finishing touches on the experiment in 1699; he initiated the first five Sikhs and then asked these five to initiate him in turn. This act, to me, speaks of his clear intention to pass on the mantle of temporal power to his Khalsa, while Guru Granth retained all spiritual authority. This is exactly what he did nine years later in 1708. Thus he completed the structure and requirements of a system that guarantees self-governance.

**By 1708, Sikhs and their community had reached a level of maturity; they were ready for self-governance. This fantastic model places the onus squarely where it belongs -- on us -- and places our spiritual underpinnings in the Guru Granth, making it unquestionably timeless and universal. It seems to me**

**self-evident then that Guru Granth is the repository of all spiritual authority in Sikhi; temporal authority vests in the *Guru Panth* acting collectively.**

In effect, Guru Gobind Singh divided the authority of the Guru into two integrated domains: spiritual and temporal. (“integrated” is the operative word here) This is binding doctrine and Sikhs reiterate it at every congregational prayer. “*Guru Granth ji manyo pargatt guraa(n) ki deh*” - Believe in the Granth - the embodiment of the Guru. These words were likely not uttered by the Guru but come from Giani Gian Singh in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But he did not invent the idea; he merely placed the Guru's central directive into verse that continues to capture the Sikh imagination.

There exist several versions of this *dohera* and one that antedates it by Bhai Prahlad Singh. It is one of the earliest Rahatnamas and goes: “*Akaal Purkh ke hukum te pargat chalayo panth; sabh sikhian ko hukum hae Guru manyo Granth; Guru Khalsa manyo pargat guraa(n) ki deh...*” There are variations of this as well. Bhai Kahn Singh (Nabha) suggests that the exact date of its composition remains in doubt.

**I submit that this speaks of the dual responsibility – spiritual and temporal divided between the Guru Granth and the Sikhs acting with an awareness of their spiritual heritage. To my mind, both doheras are doctrinally consistent and correct. Let me illustrate:**



Chandu, a functionary of the Mughal government wanted to cement his relationship to the house of the Guru via the kinship of marriage. Tradition suggests that the Sikhs with the guru were consulted. The marriage proposal was rejected. When the time came for the young Guru Harkishan to nominate a successor he merely pointed to the village of Bakala but named no one. The Sikh community of the day rushed to Bakala and found 22 pretenders to the Guruship. The ultimate judgment here was then made by the Sikhs themselves. Two examples from the life of Guru Gobind Singh found in the early chronicles are instructive: Once when Guru Gobind Singh was traveling with a few Sikhs he saluted a Muslim grave site with his arrow. This is against the Khalsa Code of Conduct. He was chastised by the Sikhs and happily paid a penalty. When in December 1705 Guru Gobind Singh abandoned the fort at Anandpur after a prolonged siege by the enemy, the decision was made not by the Guru but by the collective body of Sikhs in the fort. Finally, when Banda Singh Bahadur was deputed to proceed to Punjab, he was sent along with five Sikh counselors.

Our institutions were then complete. In 1708, many of the necessary institutions -

even the Akaal Takht - were functional and had been so for a good many years; the youngest institutions, nine years old then, were those of the Khalsa and the *Panj Pyarey*. There was thus no reason left for a Guru in human form to personally lead the Sikhs.

But then, you might want to argue, why does Guru Granth repeatedly remind us to look for enlightened souls (*sants*) who can guide us? Why does it tell us to find human mentors who can show us the way?

In my view, the Gurus were not foisting any new holy men and gurus on us, or Guru Gobind Singh would have named a human successor. But because of the plethora of self-appointed mentors and guides, this is a question that vexes us no end these days.

Given our present state of disarray, some might take issue with my narrative and reasoning. They might wonder if Guru Gobind Singh really thought we were ready for self-governance. A corollary is what we have done or not done with the institutions that I enumerated in the three centuries since.

I leave the causes and the cure of our current malaise to you, my dear readers.

□

**FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE, BOLD COMMENT  
READ  
THE SIKH REVIEW**

## Gurbani's Guidance and the Sikh's 'Destination'

R.K. JANMEJA (MEJI) SINGH, PH.D.

GURBANI IS A GUIDE that helps one wade through the trials and tribulations of one's **inner journey**. Talking about this journey is like describing the adventure through an enchanted universe that is alive with mysterious sounds, landscapes, plants and flowers, whispering waterfalls, majestic mountains, enchanting animals, beautiful birds, frightening demons, attractive beauties, deserts, destructive and devastating forces (Bhav Sagar-the frightening ocean). **Each time you have a different experience, you find new constellation of meanings in each thing you have experienced before and understood it quite differently.** Therefore what I may be saying today may be different even contradictory to what I might have said yesterday and what I may say tomorrow. **I am a work in progress.**

Some of what I say may be similar to your experience and some may be different. In any case description of such an experience is always incomplete and indescribable:

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਚਰਿਤ ਵਸਿਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥  
[SGGS:469]

Sacrifice unto the one who manifests  
It Self in Its Creation  
Its limits are unfathomable and can  
not be counted

### Traveler's Make Up:

The physical and psycho-spiritual make up of the person who is **embarking on an internal spiritual journey for personal transformation include** the **body, the senses (Gyan Indrian), the instinctual needs, the mind, discerning faculty (Surt) and spirituality.**

### Body:

According to Gurbani the physical body is made of five elements. Those five elements are: 1. Agni (fire) 2. Pani (water) 3. Vayu (air) 4. Dharti (earth) 5. Akash (space)

### Gyan Indrian (Sensory Apparatus):

The five sense organs one uses are: 1. eyes to see. 2. Ears to hear. 3. Nose to smell. 4. Tongue to taste 5. Skin is to feel. Through these five an individual experiences different objects and people in the environment. One also develops emotional experience of pain and pleasure.

\* This presentation was made at the Gurdwara Sahib in San Jose, California on August 25, 2012 at the celebration of Parkash Diwas of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji.

\* Meji's website [www.Humanliberation-meji.com](http://www.Humanliberation-meji.com)

Note: To view full text, readers may visit [www.chardikalaa.com](http://www.chardikalaa.com)

**Instinctual Needs: 1. Survival:**

The new born needs to **survive** on its own. It learns to breathe on its own and have to have nurturance that the mother provides. Its Gyan Indrian begin to make connection with the world. The milk nurtures the body. Tongue tastes the milk, the lips feel the touch sensation, hands begin to feel the body of the mother, infant's eyes see her; the infant begins to recognize the mother and gradually begins to develop a sense of the world around it. If the infant receives nurturing in a loving environment it begins to develop a sense of the world as a secure, trust worthy and loving place. The infant will give back to the society as an adult what it received during the formative years:

ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮੁਝ ਮਹਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੈ ਸੋ  
 ਤੇਰਾ ॥ [SGGS:1375]

Nothing that I have belongs to me  
 What ever I have is yours  
 To give back to you what belongs to you  
 Do not cost me a thing.

**2. Instinctual need is to preserve the species:**

This is expressed through the sexual impulses of the body's reproductive functions. As the individual matures it creates attraction toward the sexual mate. How a person fulfills these needs also depends on the experience the infant had in relationship to its care givers during the formative years.

**Mann (Mind):**

The senses only bring in the data. The mind interprets the sensory data. It creates an emotional response to the physical interaction and also develops understanding of the environment. When we hear very moving music we do not say my ears enjoyed the music rather we say I enjoyed the music. The new born gradually begins to create a sense of the world around it. **If the infant gets proper nurturance in a loving environment it begins to develop a secure and loving intellectual and emotional connection with the world.** The brain begins to store the emotional, intellectual and spiritual memories. **In fact this process begins before the birth** as soon as the person is conceived because the mother's state of mind, spiritual sense and what she eats and drinks and her emotional experiences during pregnancy directly affect the infant's physical, emotional and spiritual health. Mann is developed according to a person's experience and it can be described by the quote below:

ਮਨੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਮਨੁ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਬਿਓਗੀ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝੈ ਗੁਣ  
 ਗਾਈ ॥ [SGGS:1125]

Mind is yogi mind longs to meet the Beloved  
 Mind understands and Mann sings the praises (of the Beloved).

In Sidh Ghosht the Sidhas ask:

ਕਵਣ ਮੂਲੁ ਕਵਣ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ [SGGS:942]

What are your roots (spiritual tradition) what is the time of your awareness?

Who is your Guru and who are you a disciple of?

Baba Guru Nanak answered

ਪਵਨ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ [SGGS:94੩]

The life began with atmosphere

**Spirituality:** It is the essence of an individual's being. My Atma (individual soul), the fragment of Param Atma (The Supreme Soul). It is my individual self separated from Param Atma. It is a meta-meaning of mind's perception of the experienced world around us. It is to revive the memory of the One we are separated from. It is the spirit that reflects and experiences the meaning of our very existence. Who am I? Where I come from? What is the purpose of my life? Where am I going after death? **This is our spiritual essence that yearns to know It Self;** the spiritual quest. The extent and nature of spiritual awareness determines our conduct in relationship to others and our environment that can bring a state of Anand (bliss) or suffering for the individual as well as to those who one interacts with on this planet. Obtaining intellectual awareness can be an empty philosophical quest or it **could be a loving spiritual experience that reflects our yearning to meet the Beloved we got separated from at birth. The nature of this awareness would reflect in our behavior.**

## Gurbani Guidance

**Ik Onkar: There is one Creator that manifests It Self in Its Creation.** Very often it is wrongly translated as there is one God. Such a translation is incomplete and misleading

(1) **If there is one Creator who manifests It Self in every thing and every one the implication is that the essence of all creation is the same spirit. There is a spiritual unity** in the universe, every one and every thing is sacred. Mool Mantar describes the attributes of such a Creator. **The Creator is immanent as well as transcendental.** The question arises, if the essence of all of us is the same then why there is duality and so much conflict and violence?

**Haumain (I Am) is the answer:** No body really knows why the Creator decided to expand Itself and create the Universe. Mystics think that the Creator wanted to know and experience It Self therefore created the other. Gurbani describes the act of Creation as an act of spreading love:

In Asa Di Vaar it is stated:

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥  
ਦੁਜੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਚਾਉ ॥  
[SGGS:463]

God manifested Himself, then Created Naam (Name)

Next: God created the Universe.

He exults in His Creation with loving tenderness

**The purpose of embodied spirit is to experience itself in the form given to it and ultimately merge with the Source.** That is why a person is given the senses (Gyan Indrian), brain and mind to experience the world around us. **The problem arises when a person gets attached to one self (Haumain) and forgets the One spiritual essence Naam that is the Source that manifests Itself in Its Creation.** Not only one gets attached to **Haumain** one begins to become its slave. One begins to get attached (Moh) to what one has. One wants to accumulate more because of one's sense of insecurity (greed). One becomes proud of what one has and what one achieved (Hankar). If some one interferes with one's pursuits or does not treat one the way the person wants them to treat her/him then one gets angry and violent (Krodh).

**What was a gift of love (Ishk Majazit-temporal love) is transformed into lust (Kam).** Sexual hunger becomes a goal in itself. These five: Kam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh and Hankar keep us away from realizing our goal to merge with our Beloved Source from where we were separated. On the other hand five Gun (virtues) Sat (Truth), Santokh (Contentment), Daya (Mercy or Charity) Dharam (Living with spiritual consciousness), and Khima (Forgiveness) bring us closer to realizing spiritual unity and merging with the Beloved Naam.

### **The Spiritual Reality:**

Gurbani reminds us:

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

[SGGS:441]

Mind you are the manifestation of the Light recognize your true nature

Without Haumain I may not make any effort. It is Haumain that makes me look for food, relationships and get engaged in life pursuits. **Nevertheless if I only stay involved in satisfying my selfish needs, and forget who I am and the essence of my very being then I am sleep walking and trip over at every step of the way and keep on hurting my self and whatever or who ever comes in my way.**

ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

[SGGS:466]

Ego is a deadly disease but the cure is also within it.

If the Creator be in grace It can help one **practice** Guru's Shabad.

**Hukam (The divine Order):** In the very beginning of Jap Ji Sahib (One of the morning recitations for the Sikhs) Baba Guru Nanak asks:

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥

[SGGS:1]

How can one become **Real (Such or Naam)**

and break down the **wall of false-**

**hood (that creates separation)**

Guru Nanak answered:

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥  
[SGGS:1]

Walking the path following Creator's Will,  
the Divine Order will accompany you.

The next stanza describes the Hukam (Divine Order):

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥  
[SGGS:1]

By the Divine Order is everything created

**Every thing is according to Divine Order**

There is nothing outside of it  
Nanak says if one understands Hukam,  
Then one is saved from Ego.

If I understand the Divine Order then I know that I am a part of it. Causality is too complex and multidimensional. **The way I am I did not will to become what I am. Therefore, I realize that every one else is also an outcome of the Divine order.** When I look back on my life it is obvious that destiny let me be born in a Sikh family. **There is no concept of sin in Sikhi as in Judeo-Christian- Islamic religions. In fact if the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions truly believe in God's Will, or Allah's Raza, then why the individual is held responsible? Any punitive or moral judgments are based on**

**my "ignorance" and attachment to my Ego. Gurbani says,**

ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਤਿਚਰੁ ਆਖਦਾ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਹੈ ਦੁਹੁ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

[SGGS: 757]

One speaks of good and bad as long as one has a sense of duality

If one lives according to Gurbani then **one lives with a sense of gratitude for the blessings one has, and with compassion for those who are suffering because of the kind of role they are given in life, also compassion for one-self. One avoids making punitive value judgments toward one self or others. One experiences and learns from one's experience and moves on.**

One does not give credit to one self for one's successes nor looks down upon those who have less because we do not have any thing because of our own power or prowess:

ਆਖਣਿ ਜੋਰੁ ਚੁਪੈ ਨਹ ਜੋਰੁ ॥ [SGGS:7]

(I have) no power to speak, or to do meditation

Nor (do I have) power to acquire wealth and rule

Nor the power to control the disturbed mind

(I have) no power to awaken the soul  
Nor to reflect on the Divine Knowledge;

Nor the power to find the way

Nor to get release from the bondage,



**The one who has the power exercises it**

Nanak, none is high or low

**Personal Responsibility (3):** If there is no good and bad, no sin and virtue, if it is God's Will (Bhana, or Allah's Raza) or the product of the Divine Order; does that mean that one should not do any thing to improve one self or the world around? Not at all! It only shifts the focus from reward and punishment to understanding and directing our efforts to make improvements according to our understanding of the Divine Order (Hukam). If the plants in your backyard are dying do you beat them up to make them grow and bear fruit? Of course not, you try to understand what is lacking; is it lack of sun, water or nutrition and you provide the plants what it needs. Similarly, we need to understand the human behavior and provide the growing individual that will help them grow physically, emotionally and spiritually.

**Therefore, our responsibility is to understand the Divine order and create a culture that promotes love and compassion, and not fear, punishment and violence against people who do not live according to man made values.**

I have friends that are blessed with great intelligence. They grew up in house holds that could afford to send them to great engineering institutes and they are able to improve the physical environment by building roads, bridges, water distribu-

tion system, and on and on. Similarly, we know a lot about human behavior and we can build educational and cultural institutions that can promote love and compassion.

**The Destination:**

The destination of the Sikh's spiritual voyage is not to go to heaven, or wonder what is going to happen after death. The destination of a Sikh is to reduce the attachment to Haumain and merge with Naam ( Waheguru ) while one is alive. One begins to experience Waheguru every where and in every one.

**Sikhi Marag is a path** that one follows every moment to go toward meeting and emulate the Beloved and ultimately merge into the Beloved Naam Waheguru. It is not **Sikhism**, a doctrine, theory or a poetical or religious system (2,4). It is a path that liberates one from suffering when one is alive and brings peace and tranquility to the world around one. Some aspects are described above. The organized ritualistic religion is not the Sikh Path.

In Gurbani it is described:

ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਸ੍ਰੇਸਟ ਧਰਮੁ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ ॥

[SGGS: 266]

**Kamai (Pratice):**

What are the ways one could meet the Beloved and be one with the One? It is Love for God. As all of us know one does



not begin to love some one without knowing the person. After one knows the attributes of the beloved, it begins to create attraction. If the beloved is inspiring the love continues to grow.

**Do we crave for Naam? It is the sure test if we are following Gurbani spiritual path. If we do not, then all kinds of rituals and appearances or prayers are not going to bring us closer to our Beloved.** To know our Beloved we need to know from some one who has experienced this appetite and can describe the Beloved:

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ ॥  
ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ ॥  
[SGGS:462]

I am sacrifice unto my Guru (Creator) every day and hundred times over  
Who transformed humans into Devtas (gods) and took no time at all.

This Bani came from an intense love for the Beloved. This is the kind of appetite that brings us closer to the Beloved:

ਇਕ ਘੜੀ ਨ ਮਿਲਤੇ ਤਾ ਕਲਿਜੁਗੁ ਹੋਤਾ ॥  
ਹੁਣਿ ਕਦਿ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਗਵੰਤਾ ॥  
[SGGS: 96]

When I am separated from God, every moment is like Kaljug (Dark Ages)!

The Gurus, Pirs and Bhagats describe the beauty, grace and the boundless love they have experienced of the Divine that may inspire us to get to know the beloved. We praise God Waheguru because he would bless all mankind.

Through getting to know Waheguru by listening to Gurbani (Sunana) and incorporating it through Simran (meditation) creates the love (Bhav) to meet the Beloved.

ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ ॥  
ਅੰਤਰਗਤਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਉ ॥

[SGGS: 4]

Listening and incorporating it creates love in the mind

Gurbani is pure inspirational poetry. To enjoy its beauty one needs to understand it and the beauty of its composition and the depth of its language. It is set to music (Raag). The understanding of music and performing music with love (Kirtan) enhances the impact on our mind and spirit. It means that the Sikh should study the poetical and musical forms. The poetry expresses the emotions and music translates that emotion into musical form. In brief it helps to keep the company of the fellow travelers on Sikhi path (Sangat), listen to and sing Gurbani. Beloved's love inspires a Sikh to serve every one and loses the sense of the other. **The Sikh has reached his destination.**

The following are four of my writings that discuss at length the statements I have made in my presentation:

1. Singh, R.K.J. (2005), Gurbani Translation and Interpretation. This presentation was made at the inaugural conference of the Punjabi Literature Publication Trust of America to honor Giani Jang Singh ji and Mr. Azad

- Jalandhri.
2. Singh, R.K.J. (2009), Beyond Interfaith Dialogue, WWW Human liberation-Meji.com
  3. Singh, Meji, (2004), A Sikh's Paradigm for Universal Peace, Pavior, Walnut Creek, California. Chapter 13, Hukam: The Divine Order; Personal Responsibility and Sin: A Psychological Perspective
  4. Singh, R.K.J., On Being a Sikh; Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, the Sikh: Summary of the presentation made at San Jose State University during Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji's birthday celebrations (2005)



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## “ਵਾਜੈ ਅਨਹਦੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਲੀਣਾ ”: The Sound, Sense and Sensibility in Sikhi

INDERJIT NILU KAUR\*

GURU GRANTH SAHIB CELEBRATES NAAD (*shabad, raag, dhuni*) yet values *anahad* — *shabad anahad, mridang anahad, anhad bani, anhad dhuni and anhad kinguri*. What is the connection between audible and mystical vibrations? How do we experience them? What is the role of physical senses? What and how do we hear? What is the Sikh aesthetic regarding the enjoyment of *shabad dhun*? What is the *ras* and how are we to be *rasiya*? I aim to discuss these questions within the larger concept of non-duality in Sikhi.

In the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, *nâd*, or sound, is associated directly with the Divine. The Jap says:

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

Where is that Gate, and where is that Dwelling, in which You sit and take care of all?

ਵਾਜੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੀਖਾ ਕੇਤੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

The Sound-current of the Nâd vibrates there, and countless musicians play on all sorts of instruments there.

[SGGS:6]

The soothing sound of shabad kirtan is of course an integral part of a Sikh's life.

Sikhi itself began with shabad kirtan, with the songs of Baba Nanak sung to the accompaniment of Bhai Mardana's rabab. Gurbani tells us:

ਕਲਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਰਧਾਨਾ ॥

In this Dark Age, Kirtanis supreme.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੀਐ ਲਾਇ ਧਿਆਨਾ ॥

Becoming Divine-oriented, chant with focus. [SGGS: 1074]

Gurbani also emphasizes both the singing and the listening of kirtan.

ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸੁਣੈ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵੈ ॥

One who listens to and sings Divine Kirtan

ਤਿਸੁ ਜਨ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ॥

is not affected by unhappiness.

[SGGS:190]

Further, *râg* as a medium of kirtan is also valorized.

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਰਾਗ ਸੁਰੰਗੜੇ ਆਲਾਪਤ ਸਭ ਤਿਖ ਜਾਇ ॥

Blessed are those beautiful *râgs* which, when chanted, eliminate all desire. [SGGS:958]

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Yet, Sri Guru Granth Sahib recognizes music as a double-edged sword.

ਗੀਤ ਰਾਗ ਘਨ ਤਾਲ ਸਿ ਕੂਰੇ ॥

The various songs, rāg and rhythms are false.

ਤਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਦੂਰੇ ॥

They lead to worldly entrapment and distance from the divine.

ਦੂਜੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

The pain of worldly entrapment does not leave them.

ਛੁਟੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦਾਰੂ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ ॥

But the Divine-oriented are emancipated by the elixir of singing Divine praise. [SGGS:832]

Here the guru warns that mere music may well lead to worldly entrapment, and recommends singing Divine praise as the remedy. Further, the guru presents us with a model for singing that avoids such entrapment:

ਇਕਿ ਗਾਵਤ ਰਹੇ ਮਨਿ ਸਾਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇ ॥

Some sing on and on, but their minds do not find happiness.

ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

In egotism, they sing, but it is wasted uselessly.

ਗਾਵਣਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਨਾਮ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

Those who love the Naam, sing the song.

ਸਾਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

They contemplate the True Bani, the Shabad. [SGGS: 158]

*Haumai* (the sense of I and mine) is thus seen as a major impediment to the imbibing of *shabad*. *Haumai* prevents connection with the Universal One.

The ideal kirtan singer is recognized as someone attuned to the One:

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਧੁਨਿ ਏਕੈ ਏਕੈ ਰਾਗੁ ਅਲਾਪੈ ॥

[One who] Sings the rāg of the One Universal Creator.

ਏਕਾ ਦੇਸੀ ਏਕੁ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ਏਕੋ ਰਹਿਆ ਬਿਆਪੈ ॥

In the land of the One, shows the way to the One, and remains immersed the One.

ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਏਕਾ ਹੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਏਕੋ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਪੈ ॥੧॥

Attuned to the One, serves only the One, and meditated on the One Divine.

ਭਲੋ ਭਲੋ ਰੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ॥

Such is a fine kīrtan singer.

[SGGS:885]

Thus, we see that Sri Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes a particular sound, a particular music, and a particular focus. It is the sound of Divine Praise, rendered musically, with humility, and deep spiritual

contemplation on and connection with the One.

There is also a particular sensibility that the guru asks us to inculcate — that of *sahaj dhyân*.

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜਬ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

Sing *Bilâval*, only when the Divine Name, is on your tongue.

ਰਾਗ ਨਾਦ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਜਾ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

The *râg*, *nâd*, and *shabad* are beautiful, when they bring serene contemplation.

ਰਾਗ ਨਾਦ ਛੋਡਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

So leaving behind the *râg* and *nâd*, serve the Divine, and obtain honor in the Divine court.

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਚੁਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥

Nanak, as Divine-oriented, contemplate the Divine, and rid your mind of egotistical arrogance. [SGGS: 849]

How is one to achieve this *sahaj dhyân*? In this world of sensory bombardment and excitement, how is one to achieve serene contemplation, a calm and easy focus? Gurbani tells us:

ਦਸਮੀ ਦਸ ਦੁਆਰ ਬਸਿ ਕੀਨੇ ॥

The tenth day of the lunar cycle, overpower the ten sensory and motor organs

ਮਨਿ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ ਲੀਨੇ ॥

The mind will be content with the chanting of *Nâm*.

ਕਰਨੀ ਸੁਨੀਐ ਜਸੁ ਗੋਪਾਲ ॥

With the ears, hear the Praises of the Divine.

ਨੈਨੀ ਪੇਖਤ ਸਾਧ ਦਇਆਲ ॥

With the eyes, behold the kind and holy.

ਰਸਨਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ਬੇਅੰਤ ॥

With the tongue, sing the Glorious Praises of the Infinite Lord.

ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਿਤਵੈ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਗਵੰਤ ॥

In the mind, remember the Perfect Lord God. [SGGS:298]

The guru gives us a model of the senses. We are asked to inculcate a mystical sense, to experience the mystical realm (but not in ascetic life, as will be emphasized below). This is a state of an expanded spiritual experience where the mind is detached from the sensory, and engrossed in the *anhad shabad* vibration.

ਖਟੁ ਮਟੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਮਨੁ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ॥

Above the six energy centers of the body dwells the detached mind.

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਧੁਨਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਜਾਗੀ ॥

Awareness of the vibration of the Word has been awakened deep within.

ਵਾਜੈ ਅਨਹਦੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਲੀਣਾ ॥

The mystical sound current resonates within; my mind is engrossed in it.

ਗੁਰ ਬਚਨੀ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਪਤੀਣਾ ॥

Through the Divine Word, faith in the True Name is confirmed.

[SGGS: 903]

This expanded spiritual state is a confluence of deep devotion for the Divine, the experience of *anhad* vibrations and a Divine-attuned consciousness.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਾਗ ਸੁਆਦ ਅਨ ਤਿਆਗੇ ॥

The Divine-oriented renounces other songs and tastes.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਭਗਤੀ ਜਾਗੇ ॥

The mind of the Divine-oriented is awakened to devotion.

ਅਨਹਦ ਸੁਣਿ ਮਾਨਿਆ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥

Hearing mystical vibrations, the mind contemplates the Word.

ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਿ ਭਏ ਨਿਰੇਕਾਰੀ ॥

Understanding itself, this soul becomes attuned to the Formless Lord.

[SGGS: 415]

This attunement to the Formless One brings about a deep special aesthetic experience. The process may be described in the words of Otto (1923, as quoted in Beck 2006: 4):

Music, in short, arouses in us an experience and vibrations of mood that are quite specific in kind . . . the real content of music is not drawn from the ordinary human emotions at all . . . Musical feeling is rather (like numinous feeling) something 'wholly other'.

The mind becomes immersed in Nam Ras, Har Ras and Amrit Ras. It experiences bliss that is beyond other *ras*, beyond other aesthetic delights.

ਅਨ ਰਸੁ ਚੁਕੈ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਮੰਨਿ ਵਸਾਏ ॥

Other aesthetic experiences are forgotten, when the divine aesthetic experience comes to dwell in the mind.

[SGGS: 115]

This *ras* is distinct from other aesthetic experiences. It brings contentment.

ਜਿਤਨੀ ਭੁਖ ਅਨ ਰਸ ਸਾਦ ਹੈ ਤਿਤਨੀ ਭੁਖ ਫਿਰਿ ਲਾਗੈ ॥

The more one feels hunger for other *ras*, the more this hunger persists.

ਜਿਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਵੇਚੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਗੁਰ ਆਗੈ ॥

Those unto whom the Lord Himself shows mercy, bow their head to the Guru.

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਰਸਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿਆ ਫਿਰਿ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥

Servant Nanak is satisfied by Har Ras. He shall never feel hungry again.

(SGGS: 167)



We see then a complete model of sound, sense and sensibility that enables a mystical, blissful aesthetic experience.

However, it is very important to recognize that the attunement to the *anhad*, the detachment from the sensory, the aesthetic experience of *Har Ras* does not suggest withdrawal from the world. Sri Guru Granth Sahib endorses a householder's life. It is within this family life that one must immerse in the *anhad* and in the *Har Ras*. This is the path of *sahaj*. It is a way of being and becoming, where the *anhad* is experienced

amidst the sounds of everyday life. The medium of musical sound vibrations is used to transcend to mystical vibrations.

Thus, while *nâd* has a place of tremendous value in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, its ultimate role is to enable the awakening of the *anhad*, of the *ajap jâp* as we go about our daily lives. The sound of music is to be used with a sense and sensibility that enables that experience of "*vajai anhad mera mun leena*".

□

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### OBITUARY

**The Sikh Review** is deeply grieved to know about the sad demise of Sdni Uttamjit Kaur Ji, wife of Sr. Tarlochan Singh, ex MP (& former Chairman, National Minorities Commission) at Delhi on June 26, 2013.

We fervently pray for the peace of the soul of the dear departed, and convey our heartfelt condolences to Sr. Tarlochan Singh.

- Publisher, SR

## The Guru Granth Sahib: Ethics and Economics

NIRVIKAR SINGH\*

### Abstract

A narrow view of economic thinking focuses only on the role of markets, with some role for government in instances of “market failure.” However, economics has its roots in the broader field of moral philosophy, which continues to influence many modern economic thinkers. This paper first provides an overview of this thinking, on the relationship between economics, collective moral codes, and individual motivation. This framework is then used to discuss the relevance and implications of the message of the Guru Granth Sahib in the economic and social spheres of human action. It also offers some observations on the Sikh way of life as reflected in the actions of the Sikh Gurus and their disciples. Two specific areas where the paper draws some lessons are the process of formation of preferences and attitudes toward economic inequality. **Markets, Morals and Motives: Economics and the Guru Granth Sahib**

A Sikh could take the view that everything is secondary to the message of the Guru Granth Sahib, and could be dispensed with. For a committed Sikh that is a reasonable position. On the other hand, the passage of time and the shrinking of geographic barriers mean that there are benefits to broader intellectual engagement for the followers of the Guru.<sup>1</sup> In this section, I attempt to relate the complex of ideas that have come before to the words and ideas we find in the Guru Granth Sahib. Connecting the latter to these other streams of thought may possibly give us some insights into the problem I started out with, the perceived need to re-

think our economic system.

As a preliminary, let us remind ourselves of the centrality of the Guru Granth Sahib as a source of ethical guidance. For example, Nripinder Singh (1990) has addressed this issue in his book, *The Sikh Moral Tradition*. His focus is on the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sikh community, but his scope of execution is much broader. He provides a detailed account of the evolution and refinement of the Sikh Rahit, the code of conduct, and effectively makes the case that “The Rahitnamas... are best understood, at least in their fundamental ideal direction, as being in conso-

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Excerpts from author's Paper “Markets, Morals and Motives: Economics and Guru Granth Sahib.”

nance with the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib.” (Singh, 1990, p. 105) He goes on to provide a concise statement of a central tenet for Sikhs:

What is remarkable in this early effort at consolidation of Sikh faith is Sikhs’ constant and unvarying allegiance to *bani*, the Gurus’ utterance, as the source of all goodness and the standard for righteous living. (p. 216)

An insistent motif in the early literature – and one that even twentieth century Singh Sabha writers reiterate in almost identical terms – is that, in these times, as, indeed later, one becomes a professed and practicing Sikh by acknowledging, comprehending and living the *bani*. (p. 217)

With the above reminders, I turn to what we might infer from the Guru Granth Sahib about the appropriate conduct of economic affairs.

The general moral precepts of the Guru Granth Sahib are well known. Here are several key examples.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Truthful Living*

ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ

Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living [SGGS: 62]

#### *Egalitarianism*

ਜਾਤੀ ਦੈ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਸਚੁ ਪਰਖੀਐ ॥

What good is social class and status? Truthfulness is measured within.

[SGGS: 142]

ਗਰਭ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ ॥

In the dwelling of the womb, there is no ancestry or social status.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ ॥੧॥

All have originated from the Seed of God. || 1 || [SGGS: 324]

#### *Work, Charity and Humility*

ਜੇ ਲੋੜਹਿ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਰਿ ਪੁੰਨਹੁ ਨੀਚ ਸਦਾਈਐ ॥

If you yearn for goodness, then perform good deeds and feel humble.

[SGGS: 465]

ਇਸੁ ਤੇਖੈ ਥਾਵਹੁ ਗਿਰਹੋ ਭਲਾ ਜਿਥਹੁ ਕੋ ਵਰਸਾਇ ॥

Instead of wearing these beggar’s robes, it is better to be a householder, and give to others. [SGGS:587]

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥

One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥

O Nanak, he knows the Path. || 1 || [SGGS: 1245]

#### *Shared Humanity*

ਖਿਮਾ ਗਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਤੁ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖੰ ॥

To practice forgiveness is the true fast, good conduct and contentment.

[SGGS:223]

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਦੂਤੁ ਨਹੀ ਬੈਰਾਈ ॥

I have no enemies, no adversaries.

ਗਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਚਾਲੇ ਏਕੈ ਭਾਈ ॥੩॥

I walk arm in arm, like brothers, with  
all. ॥ 3 ॥ [SGGS:887]

ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਤ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੀ ॥

One who performs selfless service,  
without thought of reward,

ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਹੋਤ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥

shall attain his Lord and Master.  
[SGGS: 286]

These precepts are unsurprising in a modern context, though the dismissal of caste and social status and statements about the universality of humanity would have been more radical in the original Indian social milieu (as would have Guru Nanak's positive commentary on the proper status of women, which I have not given here). The rejection of asceticism would also have been a differentiator from the more typical Indic mode of thinking. The moral goodness of earning an honest living associated with spurning asceticism fits well with the development of the Sikh community as I have described it in the last section. At the same time, there are prescriptions for actions of giving and forgiving, which flow from the idea of shared humanity. Implicitly, there is a strong message of egalitarianism, and of doing the right thing, with some indicators of what that includes, such as honest work and sharing with others.

The idea of trust, discussed in the last section as a way of overcoming inefficien-

cies in economic behavior, also features in the Guru Granth Sahib, as in the following:

ਮਨੁਖਾ ਨੋ ਕੋ ਨ ਵਿਸਹੀ ਚੁਕਿ ਗਇਆ ਵੇਸਾਸੁ ॥

No one places any reliance in the self-willed; trust in them is lost.

[SGGS: 643]

It is important to realize, though, that this statement is made in a deeper moral context. Trust may have a material or instrumental consequence, as in economic models that describe how incentives to cheat are overcome, but the Guru is here going deeper. Norms that rely on external punishment or reward do not make one a Gurmukh – facing the Guru. That only comes through internal transformation. In this context, I want to point out that Nripinder Singh has a useful discussion of *sidq* (active faith) and *santokh* (contentment) as states in which an individual aligns naturally with the Divine Will, *hukam*, to achieve this transformation. The concepts postulated here are therefore difficult to capture in the economic idea of preferences. Though they find limited echoes in Adam Smith's moral sentiments, the qualities of a Gurmukh seem to transcend Smith's view of human reality. On the other hand, the following statement focuses more obviously on greed as a destroyer of trust.

ਲੋਭੀ ਕਾ ਵੇਸਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥

Do not trust greedy people, if you can avoid doing so.

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਧੁਹੈ ਜਿਥੈ ਹਥੁ ਨ ਪਾਇ ॥

At the very last moment, they will deceive you there, where no one will be able to lend a helping hand.

[SGGS: 1417]

The implication is that greed is immoral, and this is of course said more explicitly in numerous verses in the Guru Granth Sahib, either focusing on greed and possessiveness, or including greed in the list of five vices, along with lust, anger, attachment and egotistical pride. Not surprisingly, while Smith and the discipline of economics focus on how people are, the Guru Granth Sahib focuses on what they can and should be.

Despite the strictures on greed, there are a large number of references to trade, merchants, bankers, wealth and capital in the Guru Granth Sahib. In light of what we have described in the previous section about the composition and growth of the Sikh community, and of the positive attributes of earning an honest living, this should not be surprising. A closer examination of the references, however, reveals that they are mainly of two related types. In one, the Divine is the True Merchant or Banker, and the Sikh is reminded to connect with the Divine through the metaphor of trade.<sup>13</sup> In the other type of reference, the trade is worldly, but the point is to state its limits, as in the following example.

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵਣਜੁ ਕਰੇ ਵਾਪਾਰਾ ॥

Everyone deals and trades.

ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਸਭੁ ਤੋਟਾ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥

Without the *Nam*, all the world loses.

[SGGS: 1064]

The implication is obvious, and reinforced in many different contexts. Worldly pursuits have their limits in the benefits they can provide, and are subordinate in the moral order to the experience of the True Name. Put differently, the benefits of active worldly pursuits are properly enjoyed in the context of being attuned to the Divine. If one likes, one can think of this as leading to a ranking of personal preference orderings à la Sen (1974).<sup>4</sup> Certainly, this view is different from the usual economic judgment of individual preferences as givens that have to be accepted. But that is perhaps the difference between the spheres of science and morality. On the other hand, one has to recognize that the use of the metaphor of trade, especially for the Divine, implies an acceptance of the principle that such activity is good, *if* carried out morally.<sup>5</sup>

A similar analysis applies to references to farming, which could possibly be viewed as a more fundamental economic activity than trade. The Divine is the True Farmer, the activities of farming are metaphors for the human being's actions to connect to the Divine, and there are limits to the benefits of farming, as for any worldly activity. Again, the key idea is that there is a deeper meaning to life, and human beings have the potential to transcend the kinds of limits that Adam Smith

sees in them, in his theory of moral sentiments.

Another kind of reference to economic life in the Guru Granth Sahib pertains to the historical experience of the Sikhs, as outlined in the last section. These verses of Guru Ram Das, for example, implicitly describe the success of the community, but in the context of adherence to the moral precepts of the Guru:

ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਖਾਧਾ ਪੈਧਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ  
ਨਾਮਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਤੇ ॥

The food, clothes and worldly possessions of those who are attuned to the *Nam* are sacred.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਸਰਾਈ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ  
ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿਖ ਅਭਿਆਗਤ ਜਾਇ ਵਰਸਾਤੇ ॥

All the homes, temples, palaces and rest stops are sacred, where the Gurmukhs, the selfless servants, the Sikhs, the holy ones, go to rest.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੇ ਜੀਨ ਖੁਰਗੀਰ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜਿਨੀ  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਤ ਚੜਿ ਜਾਤੇ ॥

All the horses, saddles and horse blankets are sacred, upon which the Gurmukhs, the Sikhs, the holy ones, mount and ride.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਹਿ ਜੋ  
ਬੋਲਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਤੇ ॥

All the deeds and moral actions are

sacred, for those who utter the True Divine Name.

ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਪੋਤੈ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਹਿ ਜਾਤੇ  
॥੧੬॥

Those Gurmukh Sikhs, who have purity as their treasure, go to their Guru.  
॥ 16 ॥ [SGGS: 648]

The Guru also is attuned to the life of the farmer:

ਸਾਵਣੁ ਆਇਆ ਝਿਮ ਝਿਮਾ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ  
ਧਿਆਇ ॥

The rainy season of Saawan has come. The Gurmukh meditates on the *Nam*.

ਦੁਖ ਭੁਖ ਕਾੜਾ ਸਭੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਸੀ ਮੀਹੁ ਵੁਠਾ ਛਹਬਰ  
ਲਾਇ ॥

All pain, hunger and misfortune end, when the rain falls steadily.

ਸਭ ਧਰਤਿ ਭਈ ਹਰੀਆਵਲੀ ਅੰਨੁ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਬੋਹਲ  
ਲਾਇ ॥

The entire earth is rejuvenated, and the grain grows in abundance.

ਹਰਿ ਅਚਿਤੁ ਬੁਲਾਵੈ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਪਾਵੈ  
ਥਾਇ ॥

God, free of care, by Divine Grace, brings close the mortal of whom God approves. [SGGS:1250]

In these and similar verses, the Guru draws a parallel between the material and the spiritual, while again saying that the



Divine is supreme over both, bringing life-giving rain as well as spiritual peace through Divine Grace.

Finally, and consistently, the same vision is expressed with respect to governance. There are numerous references to the Divine as the supreme king or emperor, before whom human kings and queens must bow.<sup>16</sup>

ਧਰ ਏਕਾ ਮੈ ਟਿਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਕੀ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਹਾ ਵਡ ਪੁਰਖੁ  
ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥੧॥

He alone is my Support; He is my only Protection. My Great Lord and Master is over and above the heads of kings. || 1 || [SGGS:1347]

The Divine can raise the poor person and humble the king in an instant:

ਉਚਾ ਤੇ ਫੁਨਿ ਨੀਚੁ ਕਰਤੁ ਹੈ ਨੀਚ ਕਰੈ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ॥  
The Creator transforms the high into the low, and makes the lowly into kings. [SGGS:1329]

The accumulation of wealth and power is transient, and may be tainted by immoral means:

ਖਾਨ ਮਲੂਕ ਕਹਾਇਦੇ ਕੋ ਰਹਣੁ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥  
They call themselves emperors and rulers, but none of them will be allowed to stay.

ਗੜ੍ਹ ਮੰਦਰ ਗਚ ਗੀਰੀਆ ਕਿਛੁ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥  
Their sturdy forts and mansions - none of them will go along with them.

ਸੋਇਨ ਸਾਖਤਿ ਪਉਣ ਵੇਗ ਧਿਗੁ ਧਿਗੁ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ॥

Their gold and horses, fast as the wind, are cursed, and cursed are their clever tricks. [SGGS:1246]

Despite this recognition of the supremacy of the Divine, this world is not irrelevant. Indeed, there are clear and strong statements about justice and the duty of a good ruler, and condemnation of oppression, which themselves flow from the natural justice and order of the Divine:

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਚੁਲੀ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕੀ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਕਾ ਸਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥

For the Brahmin, cleansing is contentment; for the householder, it is truth and charity.

ਰਾਜੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਨਿਆਵ ਕੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

For the king, cleansing is justice; for the scholar, it is true meditation.

[SGGS:1240]

And again:

ਭੂਪਤਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਰੰਗ ਰਾਇ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ॥

Kings, rulers and monarchs enjoy pleasures and gather the poison of Maya.

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਹੇਤੁ ਵਧਾਇਦੇ ਪਰ ਦਰਬੁ ਚੁਰਾਇਆ ॥

In love with it, they collect more and more, stealing the wealth of others.

ਪੁਤੁ ਕਲਤੁ ਨ ਵਿਸਹਹਿ ਬਹੁ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਲਗਾਇਆ ॥

They do not trust their own children or spouses; they are totally attached to the love of Maya.

ਵੇਖਦਿਆ ਹੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਧੁੰਹਿ ਗਈ ਪਛੁਤਾਇ ਪਛੁਤਾਇਆ ॥

But even as they look on, Maya cheats them, and they come to regret and repent. [SGGS:1245]

The criticism of unjust rule strongly extends to oppressive government officials:

ਹਰਣਾਂ ਬਾਜਾਂ ਤੈ ਸਿਕਦਾਰਾਂ ਏਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਨਾਉ ॥

Deer, falcons and government officials are known to be trained and clever.

ਫਾਂਧੀ ਲਗੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਫਗਾਇਨਿ ਅਗੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਥਾਉ ॥

When the trap is set, they trap their own kind; hereafter they will find no place of rest.

ਸੋ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਸੋ ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਬੀਨਾ ਜਿਨੀ ਕਮਾਣਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

He alone is learned and wise, and he alone is a scholar, who practices the Name.

ਪਹਿਲੋ ਦੇ ਜੜ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੰਮੈ ਤਾ ਉਪਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਛਾਉ ॥

First, the tree puts down its roots, and then it spreads out its shade above.

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥

The kings are tigers, and their officials are dogs;

ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥

they go out and awaken the sleeping people to harass them.

ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਾਉ ॥

The public servants inflict wounds with their nails.

ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੋ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ ॥

The dogs lick up the blood that is spilled.

ਜਿਥੈ ਜੀਆ ਹੋਸੀ ਸਾਰ ॥

But there, in the Court of the Lord, all beings will be judged.

ਨਕੀ ਵਢੀ ਲਾਇਤਬਾਰ ॥੨॥

Those who have violated the people's trust will be disgraced. || 2 || [SGGS, :1288]

Divine justice will prevail for oppressive rulers:

ਬਿਪਰੀਤ ਬੁਧੰ ਮਾਰਤ ਲੋਕਹ ਨਾਨਕ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਦੁਖ ਭੋਗਤੇ ॥੨੪॥

Those cruel-minded rulers who oppress the people, O Nanak, shall suffer in pain for a very long time. || 24 || (SGGS:1356)

The message of all these verses together is a strong one, against inequality and injustice in *this* world. Even though the ultimate Truth is beyond the day-to-day lives of humanity, these lives are significant, and equally valuable, kings, beggars, traders, farmers, men and women. If anything, rulers have an additional obligation not to abuse the power of their positions. Their preferences must be morally unobjectionable, because their behavior has far-reaching effects. Rulers and

government officials who focus on accumulation of wealth rather than ruling benevolently are misguided and to be condemned.

In 1788, James Madison, conceptualizing the structure of the new American government, and making a case for checks and balances, wrote, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions." The message of the Guru Granth Sahib is that human beings, while not angels, can follow a path to more moral behavior. The implications of this for governance structures are not drawn out by the Guru, but have been lived and have evolved in subsequent Sikh history, a topic for a separate paper.

## 5. Conclusions

The recent economic crisis, together with more long-standing concerns about sustainability, has called into question the role of capitalism as an economic system, providing an antidote to the market triumphalism that followed the collapse of Soviet-style communism. The current weakness of the European economic model, with its mixture of social concerns

and market-led allocation, suggests that there is no easy "third way."

Economics, which has made progress in explaining how markets work, as well as the limits of their successful functioning, has also begun to dig deeper into the subtleties of human behavior. This line of inquiry includes more nuanced accounts of individual human motivation, as well as attempts to understand the role and evolution of social norms. The focus tends to remain, however, on instrumentalist explanations, and motivation through extrinsic incentives, since the goal of scientific analysis is to make predictions based on empirical realities.<sup>7</sup>

There is a small but significant strand in economics, deriving from the deep traditions of philosophy, including moral philosophy, that is willing to admit the possibility of intrinsic moral judgments about human motivation, independent of their narrow material consequences. This strand of thinking is where one finds a connection to Sikh philosophy, as articulated in the Guru Granth Sahib, and lived in practice. The Guru Granth Sahib lays out a moral position that emphasizes the equality and dignity of humanity, and the virtue of respecting that dignity and equality in one's daily actions. There is explicit and implicit moral guidance with respect to wealth accumulation, hard work, sharing the fruits of that labor, and also the supremacy of spiritual advancement. The message is one of achieving beneficial individual and social outcomes – again with the spiritual dimension taking priority but in harmony with the

need for material well-being – through personal transformation. Intrinsic motivation takes priority over extrinsic incentives.

A greater focus on the possibilities of harnessing human potential through intrinsic motivations, such as human desires for dignity, creativity and overall meaning, as well as creating pathways for human beings to understand themselves and move closer to some “better” level of motivation

(so they have more moral preferences, to use economic jargon), may be a fruitful approach to rethinking economic systems. The moral code of the Guru Granth provides one perspective on this possible project. Humanity will never be perfect, and history has taught us that there are no utopias, but that should not stop us from striving for progress on more than the dimension of accumulating material wealth.



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\* \* \* \* \*

1. Indeed, the Sikh Gurus actively engaged with other religious and moral traditions, as is clear from many of the compositions of the founder, Guru Nanak.
2. These excerpts were obtained using Gurbani Researcher 2, authored by Gurjot Singh et al (1995-2002). The translations are also from that program, though I have modified them in some cases where I thought doing so would capture the meaning more accurately.
3. Another metaphor makes the human mind the trader and the body the storehouse.
4. Again, the connection between preferences and actions is that moral preferences will lead to moral actions. This also suggests that there is no simple answer to the question, "How much is enough?", which was posed in the conference. Greed is immoral, and wealth accumulation for its own sake, or when others clearly do not have enough, is also to be condemned, but great material success alone is not wrong. What the successful person does subsequently matters. These issues are discussed quite clearly in Sandel (2009).
5. In this context, it is interesting that Nripinder Singh points out that Sikh moral preceptors have not banned usury, seeing it as a natural part of trading and mercantile activities, but have disapproved the charging of interest when a loan is made to someone in need. This is a refined distinction that nicely captures a concern for equity and allows for context.
6. This perspective is therefore strongly antithetical to traditions in India and elsewhere that sought to elevate kings to quasi-divine status, and more consistent with modern democratic thinking. Though the role of religion in public life remains contentious, it is clearly present, in mottos such as "In God We Trust," so one does not have to completely separate modern political discourse from religious or other moral beliefs. This is brought out very persuasively in Sandel (2009).
7. Academic thinking and research pertaining to management within organizations has a much stronger component of attention to intrinsic human motives, as well as methods for aligning motives. Efforts to create corporate cultures, or to provide leadership training or ethical guidance for employees are examples of this concern.

## Physics and Metaphysics of Guru Granth Sahib

NIKKY-GUNINDER KAUR SINGH\*

### Abstract:

The Sikh religion is lodged in Gurbani, which continues to bring about new potentialities and possibilities. More than 25 million men and women worldwide rely on its existential power. It is the centre of Sikh private and public life: it is the core of their religious and moral values; it is the Sovereign presiding at all their ceremonies and celebrations. Unlike Plato who found poetry too captivating and, therefore, banished the poets from his Republic, the Sikh Gurus utilized the poetic medium to awaken their followers with an appreciation and love for the Infinite Divine. What is utterly amazing: How is the divine revelation so aesthetically powerful? How is the spontaneous Gurbani so perfect in its alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and meter? This paper seeks to analyze that wondrous hub where the physical beauty of the Scriptural verse fuses with its metaphysical substance.

### The Divine Matrix:

Gurbani is traced to the divine One, Consequently it functions as both the medium and the source of revelation. Guru Nanak proclaims, “ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥” — as comes to me the Master’s Word, that is what I say, O’ Lalol!” (SGGS: 722); “*ta mai kahia kahan ja tujhai kahaia* — I only spoke when you made me speak” (SGGS: 566); and “ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥” — Nanak speaks just as that One makes me speak” (SGGS: 1331).

For the second Guru, the texture of transcendent light is the oral: “ਜਿਚਰੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੋਤਿ

ਤਿਚਰੁ ਜੋਤੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਤੂੰ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਵਿਣੁ ਜੋਤੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਿਹੁ ਦਿਖਾ ਸਿਆਣੀਐ ॥” — in the light is your speech” (SGGS: 138). The Gurus repeatedly admit that they have no control over their orality; they utter only what comes to them. Guru Ram Das says, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹੁ ਕਦਾਏ ॥ — truth, truth is the word of the true Guru, know it as the truth, O Sikhs, for the Creator Itself slips out the truth from the lips” (SGGS: 308). In the same vein, the Fifth who put together the sacred text: “ਬੋਲਾਇਆ ਬੋਲੀ ਤੇਰਾ ॥” — I speak as you make me speak (SGGS: 623); “ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਬੋਲਾਇਆ ਤੇਰਾ ॥” — Nanak says what you make him say”

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(SGGS: 743); and yet again, “ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥” — I do not know how to speak; I only say as you command me to” (SGGS: 763). The equivalence between the utterance and the Guru is consistently affirmed: “ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥” — the Guru is the Word, the Word is the Guru, within the Word lie all elixirs (SGGS: 982). The Guru’s communication and the divine revelation are identical.

Wondrously, the spontaneous speech ends up being most artistic! The words come in a gusty speed and form into lovely artistic designs, innovative similes, mesmerizing paradoxes, and brilliant metaphors. They create perfect alliteration and rhyme, lyrical assonance and consonance. Their momentum produces geometric patterns, verbal arabesques, stair-like parallelisms, and dynamic somersaults, which can awaken the consciousness to the infinite reality permeating each and all. (As an undergraduate, I explored these literary techniques in great length. See my honors thesis, *The Physics and Metaphysics of the Guru Granth Sahib*.)<sup>1</sup>To take just one example, Guru Nanak says, “ਕਰ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੰਗਨੁ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਧਰੇਈ ॥” — by wearing the bracelet created by the Creator, consciousness is held steadily” (SGGS: 359). **The bracelet (*kangan*) is a symbol of dynamic action, and the word action (*kar*) recurs constantly in this line: her bracelet is**

**made (*kari*) by the creator (*karta*) and worn around her hand (*kar*). Likewise, the simple similes from the Punjabi landscape endow the familiar sights and sounds with enchantment,** the paradoxes break the conventional linear mode of thinking, and the metaphors expand the human experience. The transcendent soil of Gurbani gives new meaning to materials in this universe. Not fragmented by manmade walls of religion, gender, race, or class, it pours out of the Divine matrix through their deepest selves. The Gurus’ orality revitalizes the senses, psyche, imagination, and the spirit. Its impact can be discerned in the following dimensions:

### 1) Spontaneous Communitas:

The Guru’s divine experience transpiring without conceptual constructs ends up reproducing an ineffable togetherness amongst readers/hearers, something that the anthropologist Victor Turner categorized as “*spontaneous communitas*.”<sup>2</sup> When Guru Nanak settled by the banks of the Ravi in Kartarpur, men and women from different religious and societal backgrounds gathered around to hear and recite his sonorous rhyme. As documented by Bhai Gurdas, the daily pattern of life in Kartarpur revolved around Gurbani: “in the morning **Japu** was recited, and in the evening, **Arati** and **Sohila**.”<sup>3</sup> Guru Nanak’s hymns were the powerful ligament that bonded men and women together in this first Sikh community, and to-date, they are part of the daily Sikh routine. The fellow-

ship generated by Gurbani is spontaneous — devoid of any deliberate cognitive or volitional construction. Starting in Kartarpur, men and women were attracted by his sublime utterances. Discarding hegemonies of caste, class, gender or creed, discarding conventional religious practices and rituals, they came to hear and recite Guru Nanak's verse. Engaged in ordinary occupations of life, these first "Sikhs" affirmed a new sense of family. Mutuality and reciprocity, which marked their relationship, continues to be the driving force. Fixed identities and distinctions dissolve as men and women sit on the floor and together hear, recite, and sing the Guru's words. In doing so they join contemporary Sikhs with those sitting midst Guru Nanak in Kartarpur; they join a congregation in rural Punjab with those in the Diaspora — be it E. Africa, UK, or the New World. Through Gurbani "Sikh" subjectivity came into being, and through Gurbani it is sustained.

## 2) Epistemological Resource:

Gurbani is a unique epistemological resource, igniting several intricate currents all at once. First of all, it **celebrates** the Singular One Nanak experienced. There is a certainty about Being configured at the beginning of Guru Nanak's prelude to his Japji (*ikk oan kar*), and the Gurus continue to rejoice in its infinite magic and wonder. There is an utter lack of ifs or buts, or proofs, or arguments, for its existence. The One IS. Anybody and everybody can embrace that One, literally the numeral *1kk* (1). Profound joy surges

throughout their verse and in turn boosts the confidence and emotions of readers/listeners. Furthermore, Guru Nanak goes on to **articulate** the *Ik Oan Kar as sat* (Truth or Reality). His verbal approach indicates his inclination to bring Being into language. By giving the name (*nam*) — *sat* — a participle of *as* (to be), he identifies Truth as "existing," "occurring," "happening," "being present." And along with celebrating and naming that absolute One, the founder Guru puts in motion the threefold hermeneutic process (explored extensively by the literary critic Hans-Georg Gadamer): an **understanding, interpretation, and application** of that One.

Right after naming the One as Truth, the Guru tries to **understand** its nature. A host of personal and impersonal qualities without conjunctions or prepositions issue forth: "*karta purakh nirbhau nirvair akal murat ajuni saibhan gur prasad* — creator person, without fear, without enmity, timeless in form, unborn, self-existent, gift of the Guru." Known as the **Mul Mantar** (root creed), this prelude to his inaugural hymn "Japji" in the GGS, recurs throughout Sikh scripture. The rest of the 38 stanzas of the Japji, and actually the entire Guru Granth, elucidate Guru Nanak's **interpretation** of the One, which is both metaphysical and theological.

Gurbani is a kaleidoscopic hermeneutics of the singular Reality. Opposite binaries between Hindu Bhakti and Abrahamic/Islamic worldviews are transcended: "Some call it Rama, some call it Khuda; some worship it as Vishnu, some

as Allah” declared Guru Arjun (GGS: 885). Even the Buddhist Nirvana is not omitted from their hermeneutics: “ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੀ ॥” — the One pervades Nirvana” (SGGS: 904). In the Gurus’ ontological understanding, there is no opposition between the One and the many, nor is there any dualism between unity and plurality: “ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥” —from the One issue myriads and into the One they are ultimately assimilated” (SGGS: 131).

Rising above binaries and categories Gurbani reaches out to that singular Divine in a variety of personal relations as well — father, mother, brother, friend, lover. The Guru claims, “ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਬੰਧ ਤੂਹੈ ਤੂ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥” — you are our mother, father, relative, and you permeate us all” (SGGS: 818). In such emotionally charged verses the Gurus embrace the One abiding in everybody in a range of family figures. The sense of plenitude strips off conventional stratifications and widens the spiritual experience.

Importantly the Gurus’ **epistemic Absolute has a subjective significance**: it is applied to existential meaning. As Gadamer observed, the cognitive and the practical are not different dimensions: interpretation, understanding, and application constitute a singular hermeneutic process.<sup>4</sup> For the Sikh Gurus the knowledge of Truth is no different from its lived praxis. After naming the One as **Truth**, Guru Nanak raises the question “How to become Truth? How to break the walls of falsity?

“ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥” There is a quick shift from the metaphysical Divine to the individual; from the timeless Creator to life lived truthfully here and now; from the Divine ideal to the everyday attitudes, behavior, and actions. Orthopraxy takes precedence over orthodoxy, for a truthful mode of existence is deemed higher than the conception of Truth: “Higher than everything is Truth but higher still is True living” (SGGS: 62). **Guru/bani is the epistemological mechanism that brings the ever present Being into consciousness so that life may be lived authentically here and now. The Gurus were very sensitive to the hegemonies of caste, class, creed, race, ethnicity, and gender that prevailed in medieval north India. Their sublime verse makes readers cognizant of the prejudices and stereotypes they may hold.**

Clearly, Gurbani does not whisk readers away into some world of Plato’s Pure Forms; it is not headed towards heavens or another world out there. Their universal lyrics help make sense of particular social, economic, political, and religious problems that arise at any historical moment. But they convey knowledge through the aesthetics of gurbani. As Guru Nanak said, “Only the relisher of fragrance can recognize the flower — “ਰਸੀਆ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਸਕ ਕਾ ਤਬ ਫੁਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ॥” (SGGS: 725). Recognition (*pachana*) requires a physical act as well as a cognitive realization, so the sensuousness of gurbani is the way to gain knowledge and insight. Teaching without teaching, the verses reach into the visceral

hub where dictatorial rules and regulations never quite make it. According to Guru Angad, “ambrosial word reveals the essence of existence; it comes with knowledge and contemplation — “ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੁ ਤੁ ਵਖਾਣੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਈ ॥” (SGGS: 1243). For the Gurus hearing/reading/singing their aesthetically charged lyrics would produce positive energy within the individual, and ultimately make its way to all others around. Cognition of the singular Infinite would dissolve egotistic obsessions and promote love and compassion towards all beings in the world. The material and affective textures of the Gurus’ verse aspire to heighten moral and ethical sensibilities.

### 3) Daily Sustenance:

And so the inspiring poetry provides sustenance for the Sikhs. As the textual sources demonstrate, the Gurus were prolific. A segment from each feeds the community on a daily basis. Just to give one example:

**Guru Nanak’s Japji** is the morning hymn. It is recited at the break of dawn when the mind is fresh and the atmosphere is serene. Described as the ambrosial hour in the **Japji**, dawn is considered most conducive to grasping the singular Reality named as Truth at its outset. The hymn launches read-

ers into a deeper intensity through the realms of *Dharam, Gyan, Saram, Karam and Sach* — Earth, Knowledge, Aesthetics, Action, and Truth. This fivefold journey is not an ascension into some higher regions beyond life and the world, but rather, a pulling of the Divine into the human situation. That One is known by refining moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual capacities. Thus life is lived in the truest sense — freely and expansively — as it would be in *Sach Khand*, the Realm of Truth. The Name of the Absolute is no different from experiencing Truth. **This first prayer in the GGS encapsulates the fundamental philosophical and ethical beliefs of the Sikhs.**

To conclude, Gurbani sets the spiritual process in motion. I call it a SPIRITUAL SPARK PLUG . Every passage in the Guru Granth Sahib fuses the physical and metaphysical elements, which have profound practical effect. Pulsating with a passion for the Divine, the rhythmic beats move readers into a deeper intensity and communion with something much larger. Indeed, the Sikh Gurus open up the universal horizon: through their aesthetic verse, readers, listeners, and singers can relive their wondrous intimacy with the Divine Infinite.



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## Dealing with Violence: Gurbani shows the Way

JAGMOHAN SINGH SAHNI\*

INJUSTICE AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD are not just modern day phenomena; they have been with us since the dawn of life on Earth. The present age makes available a large variety of sophisticated and complex weapons. Gurbani teaches us that this has been happening since SATYUG, when Waheguru created the word and will continue:

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਤੂ ਗੋਸਾਈ ॥  
ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਮਹਿ ਥਾਪਿ ਉਥਾਪੇ ਜਰੁ ਵੰਡਿ ਦੇਵੈ  
ਭਾਂਈ ॥ [SGGS: 417]

Gurbani teaches both to protest injustice and violence and yet be able to accept what must be accepted with peace. "Why are innocent people killed," is a question that demands action but then it is essential to also accept His Hukam and continue to praise HIM. In Tilang Raag Guru Nanak Dev Ji sings glorious praises of Waheguru, in the city of corpses.

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਮਾਸ ਪੁਰੀ ਵਿਚਿ  
ਆਖੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥ [SGGS: 723]

Because, His Command and Justice is unquestionably correct.

ਸਚਾ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੜਾ ਨਿਆਉ  
ਕਰੇਗੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥ [SGGS: 723]

Guru Arjun Devji amplifies, in Raag Nat Narain, I do not blame anyone, what-

ever YOU do is sweet to my mind.

ਉਲਾਹਨੇ ਮੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਨ ਦੀਓ ॥  
ਮਨ ਮੀਠ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ਕੀਓ ॥ [SGGS: 978]

There are several shabads describing the violence exerted against innocent people by kings. In Sat Yug, King Harnakush along with his council of villains, met and resolved to death sentence to his son Prahlad. This incident is described by Bhagat Naam Dev Ji in Bhairao Raag. Prahlad was thrown off a mountain into the water and the fire, but Waheguru saved him and then killed the wicked Harnakash.

ਹਰਣਾਖਸੁ ਦੁਸਟੁ ਹਰਿ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਹਲਾਦੁ  
ਤਰਾਇਆ ॥ [SGGS: 451]

When we move into Treta Yug, Bhagat Kabir describes the violence that took place in Sri Lanka when Raavan kidnapped Sita and Raam Chandar attacked and killed Raavan.

ਲੰਕਾ ਗਢੁ ਸੋਨੇ ਕਾ ਭਇਆ ॥  
ਮੂਰਖੁ ਰਾਵਨੁ ਕਿਆ ਲੇ ਗਇਆ ॥  
[SGGS: 1158]

In Duapar Yug, Bhagat Kabir describes Mahabharat Yug and how Waheguru humbled the pride of Duryodhan.

ਸਹਸ ਕੋਟਿ ਬਹੁ ਕਹਤ ਪੁਰਾਨ ॥  
ਦੁਰਜੋਧਨ ਕਾ ਮਥਿਆ ਮਾਨੁ [SGGS: 1163]

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In Kal Yug, Guru Nanak Dev describes kings as butchers who torture innocent civilians. Then “the moon of truth was not visible anywhere.

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ  
ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥  
ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ  
ਚੜਿਆ ॥  
ਹਉ ਭਾਲਿ ਵਿਕੁੰਨੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਆਧੇਰੈ ਰਾਹੁ ਨ  
ਕੋਈ ॥  
ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਰਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਰੋਈ ॥  
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਨਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥  
[SGGS: 145]

In Maajh Ki Vaar, Guru Nanak Dev describes kings as being like tigers and their officials as being like dogs, that go out and awaken the sleeping people to harass them. The public servants inflict wounds and the dogs lick up the blood that is spilt, says Guru Nanak.

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥  
ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥  
ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਾਉ ॥  
ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੋ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ ॥  
[SGGS: 1288]

In Svaiyay, Bhatt Nall Ji, explains that without Guru, there is utter darkness and understanding does not come.

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨ ਘੋਰੁ ਅੰਦਾਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ॥  
ਬਿਨੁ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥ [SGGS: 1399]

Under these violent situations, how can we find peace? Guru Nanak Dev Ji answers this question in Maajh Ki Vaar,

by saying that kirtan is the light in the world.

ਕਲਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਕੋਈ ਉਤਰੈ ਪਾਰਿ ॥ [SGGS: 145]

When violence was inflicted against innocent bhagats, they handled the situation by having faith in Waheguru. Bhagat Kabir Ji describes how he was chained and thrown into the deep Ganges River, but he was saved. He says, “My mind was not shaken, so why should my body be afraid? I am not afraid because my consciousness remained immersed in Waheguru’s *Charan Kamal*.

ਗੰਗ ਗੁਸਾਇਨਿ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰ ॥  
ਜੰਜੀਰ ਬਾਂਧਿ ਕਰਿ ਖਰੇ ਕਬੀਰ ॥੧॥  
ਮਨੁ ਨ ਡਿਗੈ ਤਨੁ ਕਾਹੇ ਕਉ ਡਰਾਇ ॥  
ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਚਿਤੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥  
[SGGS: 1162]

In Bhairao Raag, Bhagat Naam Dev Ji describes how he was arrested by Sultan, and sentenced to death, unless he could bring a dead cow back to life.

ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਪੂਛੈ ਸੁਨੁ ਬੇ ਨਾਮਾ ॥  
ਦੇਖਉ ਰਾਮ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ਕਾਮਾ ॥੧॥  
ਨਾਮਾ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੇ ਬਾਧਿਲਾ ॥  
ਦੇਖਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਬੀਨੁਲਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਬਿਸਮਿਲਿ ਗਉ ਦੇਹੁ ਜੀਵਾਇ ॥  
ਨਾਤਰੁ ਗਰਦਨਿ ਮਾਰਉ ਠਾਂਇ ॥  
[SGGS: 1165]

Bhagat Naamdev prays to Waheguru, and miraculously the dead cow comes cow back to life.



ਅਪਨੇ ਭਗਤ ਪਰਿ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਆਏ ਗੋਪਾਲ ॥ [SGGS: 1166]

Now let us take a look at, why and how we can remain connected to Waheguru, as Guru Nanak Dev Ji did, in midst of violence.

Kabeer explains in Bavan Akhri....

He has painted a great picture of the world. Instead of focusing our attention on the violence around us, we should remember and focus our consciousness on the merciful Waheguru.

ਚਚਾ ਰਚਿਤ ਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਰੀ ॥  
ਤਜਿ ਚਿਤ੍ਰੈ ਚੇਤਹੁ ਚਿਤਕਾਰੀ ॥  
ਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਇਹੈ ਅਵਝੇਰਾ ॥  
ਤਜਿ ਚਿਤ੍ਰੈ ਚਿਤੁ ਰਾਖਿ ਚਿਤੇਰਾ ॥

[SGGS: 340]

To accomplish this we have to continuously practice GURBANI .....

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ  
ਬਣੀਐ ॥ [SGGS: 304]

The Oak Creek Wisconsin the gunman, Wade Michael Page, was a product of White supremacist hate group. Guru Nanak Dev in Raag Maaajh, tells us that, without the blessing of Waheguru, in a human there are four rivers of fire: Cruelity, material attachment, greed and anger. Falling into them is like being burned.

ਹੰਸੁ ਹੇਤੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਕੋਪੁ ਚਾਰੇ ਨਦੀਆ ਅਗਿ ॥  
ਪਵਹਿ ਦਝਹਿ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਤਰੀਐ ਕਰਮੀ ਲਗਿ ॥  
[SGGS: 147]

Gurbani teaches us to be brave and fearless as Lt. Brian Murphy and Satwant Singh Kaleka were in Oak Creek. Let us stand up and fight as Guru Nanak Dev Ji stood up to Babar, as described in Babarvani:

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ  
ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥ [SGGS: 722]

Guru Teg Bahadur Ji taught us the fight should be for the common good – for all people regardless of religion, race, political standing, gender, or nationality.

We see that the Republican party in the USA made history, when Ishwar Singh took the center stage and led thousands of conservatives in prayer - and when he closed with:

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜਦੀ ਕਲਾ ॥

Here he asked for blessing not upon on one party or country, but for all everywhere:

ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੈ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ॥

As a SANT we have to make an effort for peace and practice it. By meditating, we merge with Waheguru and our anxiety will vanish.

Sikhi clearly dictates that violence is not desirable but Sikhs are not pacifists. Therefore at the same time, when all peaceful efforts fail, Guru Gobind Singh Ji says, as a Sipahi, it is legitimate to raise the sword:

ਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਹ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ ॥  
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ ॥

□

## ‘The Unstruck Melody’: Re-visited

JESSI KAUR\*

THE WORDS OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB open the inner worlds of mind.

They are the sublime expression of the experiences of Gurus and saints, sages and seers who transcended the human boundaries and soared in spiritual spheres.

They come to us love-drenched, and hold our hand and lead us to eternity. They evoke the miracle that lies dormant within us. They awaken us to possibilities beyond our intellect and beyond our comprehension. Sometimes we glimpse their meaning. Sometimes we sense their luminosity. But often they remain distant and elusive.

If we understand them, they will communicate to us the mysteries of the Universe; divulge unspeakable wonders that lie hidden within our own depths. But herein is the rub. They can’t be understood. They can only be deciphered in the mystical dynamics of the soul. They reveal new dawns in the confluence of silence, and solitude, reflection and prayer, love and gratitude.

**The Unstruck Melody** celebrates the wisdom enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the only scripture in the world that contains the mystical experiences of men of faith belonging to different traditions.

\* Email: [jessikaur@gmail.com](mailto:jessikaur@gmail.com)

With lyrical commentaries on 51 concepts, it seeks to integrate various strands that run through the spiritual magnum opus, elucidating common themes and spiritual insights on a personal level. These concepts share the hidden beauty of our clay, celebrate the mystery of the Unknown, rejoice in the oneness of all and show the path to inner peace without which there is no possibility for peace in the World.

EK

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥੧॥

[SGGS: 350]

There is the One, oh my brother, there is only One  
My Lord and Master is only One.

Ek is the power that created the Universe in a moment of effulgent joy and remains an indivisible part of its creation. Self –existent and Self-illuminated, it is the unifying presence in all. Ek is the Cause, the Law, the Unseen One that permeates every atom and its parts and, yet is beyond human utterance or intellectualization

Ek doesn’t take birth or die. It is without beginning and without end. It was, is and shall be. It has no foes and is fearless. Living in its awareness keeps our

internal landscape lit up and endows us with the qualities of Ek.

Ek is visible in the inseparable color of the rainbow and the rays of the sun that gather in its fold at dusk. Ek is the spray of the wave that comes back to the embrace of the ocean. Ek is the clay of the body that returns to dust when the rosary of breaths is completed. Ek is what the soul bride longs for and finds in the embrace of the Beloved when the play of this life time is over.

Acceptance of Ek is the first baby step on the path to the ultimate union with the Source we come from. Underneath all the striving, the struggle, the race to happiness, unknown to the conscious mind the soul longs to merge back with Ek. It is the bliss we seek, the nirvana.

There are no middlemen between the experience of Ek and us. It is a part of us. We just need to embark upon an inner journey with an illumined consciousness.

The wonder of Ek will unfold spontaneously.

**Ongkar:**

*Ek Ongkar Satnaam*

One Manifested in the Universe, The True Essence

Ongkar is the manifestation of the Invisible One, the form of the Formless.

Ongkar are the worlds that are created; Ongkar the worlds that are ceased at the Will of the One.

Ongkar is the seed that flowers; Ongkar is the seed that doesn't flower.

Ongkar is the unknowable in every being that pulsates in each breath and knows the whispers of each heart. It is every breath and every heart.

It is the light that illuminates. It is the manifest that illumines darkness and yet is the darkness too.

It is the movement in every song, the passage of every dance. It is the art in artist, it is the translucence in light, it is the vibration of thunder, and it is the ache in every longing.

No picture or idol, no temple or edifice, no form or feature can adequately represent the fathomless wonder of Ongkar, and yet it is every picture and every edifice, every temple and every worshipper.

It is the Sound. It is the Word. It is all and it is none,

**Sat:**

*Satnam prabh ka sukhdæe*

The True Name is comforting

The essence of Ek Ongkar is absolute Truth -Sat.

It defines the indefinable as the unchanging – the only Truth.

It is not your truth or mine, it is not partial truth or poetic truth, and it is the truth that abides where the finite merges with the infinite.

Change is the only reality we are aware of. Everything thing that is, changes, withers, dies. There is no one above or beyond change except Sat.

Passions ebb and rise, loves flower and falter, youth blossoms and withers; Sat remains unchanged, unfaltered, and radiant above all.

Sat is immutable and eternal. Beyond analysis and beyond comprehension, it is the truth that can neither be perceived by the senses nor understood by the intellect.

It existed before time and pervades outside of time. Though beyond understanding, this Truth can be experienced in solitude and stillness, in moments of poise and praise, in the sublimation of ego and the benevolence of prayer.

The sages have taught how to cross the fiery ocean of life; on the wings of Ek Ongkar the breath touches Sat and reaches the bank of immortality. It is a narrow flight that keeps its face turned to the light; the path is finer than a strand of hair and sharper than a razor's edge, but leads with unwavering intent to Sachkhund, the abode of the Truth.

**Saran:**

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਚਰਨ ਸਰਨ ਅਨਾਥੁ ਆਇਓ  
ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਚਲੀ ॥

[SGGS: 1121]

The orphan has come to the sanctuary of God  
Says Nanak, the Omnipresent walks with him

When we consciously seek saran, the circle of divine protection, we are no more entangled in the web of fear or uncertainty.

Saran is comforting like a mother's lap because it is the Mother's lap. Saran offers a cozy blanket of reassurance that keeps us shielded from the storms and avalanches of life. The presence of the Omnipotent is the umbrella that protects us from the downpour. It strengthens our faith and we relax and let the tempest pass.

As we step into saran, we stop struggling. Recognizing our own helplessness and inability to control the outcome, we find ourselves on the gateway of surrender. We can turn back to grappling and struggling or float into saran where the countenance of reassurance smiles gently upon us, like the morning sun, benign, beautiful and safe.

The gentle touch of saran ushers the mind into ease.

Saran is a sublime sanctuary open to all. Those who seek it, walk with the Divine. In the circle of saran one experiences benevolence and abundance. It is the meadow of plenty where anxiety is not admitted, where fear does not strangle aspiration. The price of admission is humility and faith.

□

## The Sikh Way of Life: Sharing Brings Blessings!

HARBHAJAN SINGH\*

ARGUABLY, A SIKH IS NO ASCETIC. A retreat in the forest is not his home. He is an intensely social being, living a busy householder's life. He also has his needs. He also has his pains and pleasures. He has his family and children. He lives in a society and participates in its activities. He works honestly and diligently to earn his living. He performs multiple tasks as required of a householder.

Satguru is our shining our beacon of light that provides us with guidance on all aspects of our lives. Satguru illumines a Sikh's path. 'Shabad Guru', Guru Granth Sahib Ji, comprehensively portrays a Sikh Way Of Life for one's spiritual and worldly development. A true Sikh is to live that life."Sharing" is an important aspect of that life. This brings success with good cheers for God is the embodiment of goodness.

Sharing, what we have, with others, is one of the basic tenets of the Sikh Way of Life. It has a practical application in one's life. 'Daswand' - earmarking one tenth of one's earnings - is an inspiring example of practical application of this concept in real life. Every Sikh is supposed to take out ten percent of his earnings as Daswand. Though this concept is generally associated in our minds with

Gobind Singh Ji as it is part of Rehat of a Sikh yet it was Guru Nanak who laid the foundation of this concept of sharing when he said:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਗਬੁ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਗੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਮੇਇ ॥੧॥

[SGGS:1245]

### Our Lifetime Guide:

Guru provides step by step guidance. For sharing there must be earnings. Those earnings should be the result of honest labour. The entire earnings should not be kept for one's own selves. Those earnings need to be shared with others. Guru Nanak says those who tread this path of honest earnings and sharing with others will reach their destination. This is every Sikh's highway to reach his goal of life.

This path is not easy to follow. Human beings suffer from human frailties. They are basically selfish. They can hardly think beyond their own selves. They would all rationalise and justify their selfish approach. "One must have enough to spare and share. I hardly have enough to meet my and family's requirements at present. When the time comes and I reach the stage of having spare money then I will

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think of sharing.” would be a general refrain of a normal human being.

Guru has cast his Sikhs in a different mould. For a Sikh there is no option. If he wants to follow Guru’s path and live a Sikh Way of Life he has to think beyond his self. He has to shun selfish approach and reluctance to share with others. He has to put this in practice and live life of sharing with others.

#### **Wand-Chhakna: A Noble Ideal:**

The Sikh concept of sharing is not synonymous with charity. Charity presupposes a giver and a taker. Giver is in a higher and stronger position. The taker, in comparison, is lower and weaker. In Sikh concept of God or Guru (ਗੁਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਏਕੈ ਜੀ ਜਾਨੇ ॥ SGGS: 887) is the Only Giver. All others are supplicants or beggars before Him. No human being, least of all a Sikh, can arrogate to himself the role of a Giver.

The Sikh concept of Sharing is for all who follow the Sikh Way of Life. No distinction of rich or poor, high or low. No distinction of profession or avocation. Everybody is expected to share his earnings and contribute.

Contributions of many can form a pool. This pool can be used for promoting all desirable activities. These could be anything positive and beneficial to society - building and running of schools, colleges, training centres, hospitals, dispensaries, homes for needy, Gurdwaras and myriad

of other activities for the benefit of the society. Gurdwaras and Langars (free food for all) which the Gurdwaras run are the living examples of pooling of contributions of the community for benefit of all. Another example is the large number of educational Institutions including schools, a university and medical facilities established by Kalgidhar Trust Baru Sahib all from pooled contributions of the community. There are many more examples.

#### **A Fair Ethical Practice:**

While pooling of the sharing amount is very desirable because of Sikh concepts of **Sangat** (collective Spiritual upliftment) and **Pangat** (collective squatting and sharing of food) yet individual sharing is not prohibited. Guru Sahib Ji advised the Sikhs once to ‘treat a poor man’s mouth as money chest of the Guru’ (*garib da muun Guru di golak jan*). When a Sikh presents himself before the Guru he makes a humble offering and puts the same in the golak. The sharing with individual poor has to be done in the same spirit. If it is in the spirit of a humble offering to Guru (and not charity) then it will be rightful sharing. It would be welcome and desirable.

There is another beauty in Sikh concept of sharing. Contrary to the general belief that whatever you share with others or part with will diminish your wealth to that extent, the Sikh belief is entirely different. The fifth Master Guru Arjan says:



If our wealth is shared and spent - in community - with others, it will have a “multiplier” effect, and will go on increasing in a spiral.

Those who have cared to follow Guru’s above Words would have also experienced the consequential results of increasing wealth, not depleting wealth, mentioned in Guru’s Shabad. Though nobody among the Guru’s Sikhs dare doubt Guru’s Words yet there is a lurking fear in human mind whether this happen or not. Human belief and will is weak. Unflinching faith is needed to follow this path. Quoting an example would be in order. Satinder Singh Uppal (email id <U.K., records that once it occurred to him to make Guru a partner in his business. He decided to keep separately one bhat (Thai currency) on Guru’s account for each garment exported. He was, then, doing export business from Thailand from 3000-4000 bhats in the first month on Guru’s account, the amount increased to 2.5lacs bhats per month in a matter of few months. Think how much wealth Guru bestowed on his Sikh who dared to follow his path of sharing with full belief.

#### **Daswand is schematic sharing!**

Satguru’s design of human society is a Sharing Society. A sharing society would be a rich, wealthy and healthy society. It would be built on the foundations of honest labour, hard work, sharing and accommodation. Sharing naturally builds strong relationship, compassion and concern for

each other. Divinity pervades such a society. Sharing is not limited to material things. Non material things like knowledge, human labour, etc. can be shared as well. Such sharing helps in building a better society.

In comparison a society built on pure selfishness or self interest lacks compassion, any sense of accommodation or concern for others. It would be a hotbed of strife and conflict. People are likely to damage each other in pursuit of their self interest.

An anecdote readily comes to mind. A group of persons were permitted a tour of Hell as well as Heaven. The visitors decided to tour Hell first. They found the residents poor in health, weak, frail and emaciated. They were seated on a large round table. In the centre of table a very large utensil containing food was placed. Everybody seated on the table had a long wooden spoon tied to his elbow. They were to feed themselves with the help of long wooden spoon. Frenzied efforts were being made by everybody to fill the spoon and then bring the food near their own mouths. Long spoons would not permit that. The result was food spilling all over but not reaching their mouths. The visitors could now understand the reason for their being weak and emaciated. Next they visited heaven. Residents were similarly seated on the large round table. They had similar long wooden spoons tied to their elbows and food similarly placed in the centre of the table. But the residents

were healthy, happy and cheerful. They were laughing and cutting jokes. The only difference was that instead of feeding one's own self they were sharing and feeding each other. The food in one's spoon was shared with other person nearest to the tip of the spoon. This way everybody fed everybody else with his spoon. Nobody was left hungry.

A sharing society, which Guru wants us to build, is a Heaven and a selfish society, as seen in the anecdote, is a Hell.

**Ethical Path:**

The Sikh way of Life has several aspects to beautify our Life and make it

worthwhile. All these aspects are very simple and practical. Guru's Will, expressed through Gurbani of SGGS propounding the Sikh Way of Life, is to produce Ideal Human Beings who live a life of peace and happiness in this world and look forward to similar life in the world beyond ( **ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਖੀਏ ਖਰਲੋਕ ਸੁਹੇਲੇ** ॥ SGGS: 292) These ideal human beings spread happiness and peace all around and make this world a wonderful place to live in.

*N.B. If Guru Will's I intend to write on different aspects of Sikh Way Of Life from time to time.*



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## 1984: Ghalughara Cop takes lid off Punjab's shame!

EVEN AS THE ISHRAT JAHAN fake encounter case continues to make headlines, a Punjab police subinspector (SI) has created a stir by claiming he had a role in 83 fake encounters during militancy in the state during the 1990s.

The officer Mr Surjit Singh, posted in Tarn Taran district, claims to have killed many innocent Sikh youths in these encounters on the directions of senior officers who used their juniors to gain promotions and decorations.

Submitting a list of 'victims' and expressing willingness to depose against his seniors, he has approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking protection from senior officers who he said are trying to prevent him making an "honest confession."

Mr Singh has named former police chief Mr KPS Gill in the list of officers who allegedly "compelled" him to kill youngsters in fake encounters. In his petition, he has listed at least 16 fake encounters in which at least three dozen persons were killed. The case is expected to be heard on 8 July.

Mr Singh's counsel Mr RS Bains said the weight of the crimes, which the petitioner has committed and which he has witnessed, always made him sad.

"Remorse has set in to at least make an honest confession to those families whose children he had been instrumental in killing in the mistaken belief that he is doing his duty at the command of senior officers, who knew very that they are committing crimes for private ends," the counsel said.

Mr Singh claims that he joined the state police as constable in 1989 and was asked by senior police officers to kill a Sikh youth who was in police custody. As he carried out this direction, he was soon promoted to the rank of SHO police station Mehta in 1992 even as Mr Singh continues to be a constable in official records till date. He claims to have got directions from top cops to carry out fake encounters.

Mr Singh have now been suspended from service for disciplinary reasons after he allegedly approached the Tarn Taran SSP, Mr Ranjit Singh, to take up the matter with him, in an inebriated condition. Top cops question Mr Singh's claims, pointing out that the encounters cited by him took place over 20 years ago and various inquiries have been conducted regarding them.

[Courtesy: *The Statesman News Service*]



## Indian Solidarity Council Honours Sr. Jasbir Singh Bir, Chairman, DPS with 'Bharat Vidya Shiromani' Award

Sr Jasbir Singh Bir, is the son of the illustrious Bhai Sahib Ragbir Singh Bir, founder of "Atam Science" and the Dagshai Public School in Himachal Pradesh, and currently chairman of the Trust and the school managing board. His vocational expertise and social contacts have indeed been most conducive for the school's over all development.

Having graduated from the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, he served the global oil company, Burmah Shell, for over 25 years, to - later on - head "Methodex System", as Joint Managing Director.

His vocational expertise and social contacts have always contributed towards the School's over all development. He is a visionary and a humanitarian, helping the poor and needy children with free (or concessional) education. He continues to be the soul of the institution, transmitting valuable advice on the day to day running of the school.

The great legacy was passed on to him by his revered father and the Founder Chairman of Dagshai Public School, Bhai Sahib Bhai Ragbir Singh Ji Bir, respected as author and promoter of "Atam Science".



Sr. Jasbir Singh Bir has been keen to generate, in our future generations, a blend of religious fervour and sense of good citizenship to blends and make them useful, responsible and outstanding members of our society and become successful future leaders.

For his selfless service in the field of education Sr JS Bir has been awarded – **BHARAT VIDYA SHIROMANI AWARD & CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE** by the Delhi based Indian Solidarity Council on 23 Feb. 2013. The award was presented by Dr. GVG Krishnamurthy, former Election Commissioner, Dr. Bhisma Narain Singh, former Education Minister and Shri OP Verma, former Chief Justice, in the presence of educationists and intellectuals from all over India.



## Need for Developing Spiritual Values

*SIMRAN THAPAR, M.A. B.T.\**

REAL EDUCATION IS – essentially - the profound discovery of the ‘Self’, in all its inimitable glory and splendour. Arguably, ‘Self’ is higher than the body and mind, the pure fundamental essence of Life, the powerful all pervading extension of our True Source. It is self exploration, indeed, through constant contemplation and well practised gentle introspection, eventually leading to ‘Self Realisation’ which is the real purpose of life.

Formal education primarily equips a person to face the world, and – inevitably – make a comfortable living for himself and his family, and enables him to be empowered with an economic, social or political status. But it does not prepare him for ‘Self actualisation’ or ‘Self liberation’.

In sociological terms, we are groomed specifically for a life of material plenitude. Our mind-set is, from the very beginning of our existence, tailored for a fight for survival in the midst of back-breaking competition, leading to our likely success. In short, it’s an insane rush and clamour for excellence where mediocrity has no place for acceptance. Hence the challenges of turning out students as custom

made future professionals has become more demanding and stressful for both parents and educators.

In the current work-a-day scenario, there seems to be little place for human values, ethical refinement or spiritual evolution. Let’s face it, we are so far removed from our actual roots, so distant from a life of spiritual purpose and substance. Perhaps we require to be on another planet for the gratification of our latent, slumbering spiritual needs.

Apart from appropriately guiding the children for a world of adequate academic performance and earthly reward, we should be consistently sowing seeds of spiritual awareness in addition to inculcating values and virtues which chisel and mould the ‘Self Supreme’ and give us the grace to lead a copious and enriched life. This is what our youth will take away with them from good institutions when they unfurl their wings and fly away from their grooming milieu — **an unwavering conviction in the tenets of the Great gurus and an acquired attitude to translate these life-transforming values into individual achievement.**

□

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\* Vice Principal, Dagshai Public School, Dagshai Cantt., Dist. Solan (HP) 173210

## Supreme Sacrifice of Pir Budhu Shah\*

*HARJIT SINGH*

Pir Budhu Shah rushed to the Bhangani Battle field  
With 700 followers, four sons and two brothers, on learning  
That 500 Pathans, inducted in Guru's army – at his instance -  
Had deserted without cause.

He bravely faced the intimidating enemy hordes,  
Losing three sons and a brother -  
But blunted Fateh Shah's attacking flanks.  
Instead of expressing grief, the 'Pir' offered Thanks  
To Almighty Allah for their courageous campaign  
That brought victory to the Guru's Cause,  
Even as Guruji crushed Hari Chand, a wily marksman -  
forcing the others to run to safer mountainous heights!

When the victorious Bhangani heroes  
Returned to Paonta Sahib, they narrated  
their heroics with éclat.  
Guruji called Syed Budhu Shah  
A truly enlightened 'Pir' – the Seer!  
And blessed him with redemption: Nija'at O' Vasal

His stature as Guru's devout votary,  
Who sacrificed precious lives of his devotees and sons,  
Emerged tallest among the brave-hearts  
Receiving Guruji's utmost regard and esteem.



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\* Sayyid Badr-ud-Din.

\* Reference Principal Satbir Singh's *Purukh Bhagwant*, a book of biography of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (Chapter 8 page 98)



### 'Re-discovering' a Friend!

Respected S. Saran Singh Ji,

This emailed piece is about a miracle in my recent life. I have found, through the Sikh Review, my dearest friend after almost half a century, during which period all my efforts had failed. It is my tribute to SR and (its Editor). I request this piece may very kindly be published and at the earliest.

With best regards,

**KHUSHHAL SINGH**

Email: khushhals@gmail.com

### THE SIKH REVIEW as "Deus ex machina"!

Just as in ancient Greece and later - in Roman drama, God descended from above in the form of '*dues ex machina*' to help and protect the protagonist, so has **The Sikh Review** been recently operated like '*dues ex machina*' for two separated-for-long chums! They had grown up together in one school from class one, gone to the same Gurudwara, had their religious education together there from the same head Gyani ji and, with Waheguru's grace, shone as the top boys in every school examination. Their parents were close friends too.

The two boys joined the same college and pursued their separate courses. One of them became a lecturer in Ajmer, and later shifted to Administration, the other became an Engineer and joined the SAIL's Bhilai Steel plant. But they would be together for days every now and then.

They were married about the same time.

Our families last met in 1964. My engineer friend was then deputed for advance training, and, for that, he travelled with his Russian wife to U.S.S.R. For a long time I tried, but couldn't succeed to contact him. I had lost track of my dearest friend. I was heart-broken. In my first book, my feelings burst out in an article - 'Seamer from Raghbir.' My son also tried to trace him on **internet**. But he also failed.

Then, on this sixth of July, 2013 happened a miracle. There was an Email message for me: "I had a friend in 1940-1950 in Ajmer, and we had been together as students. If you are the same Khushhal Singh, whose articles/poems I have seen in **The Sikh Review**, kindly respond." It was 9.30 P.M. It was as if I had discovered a gold-mine! The same moment I emailed him.

Had **The Sikh Review** not been a '*dues ex machine*' for the two of us, making us find each other after a lapse of almost half a century! Had it not been for an attractive Magazine with an enlightened scholarly Editor, and for the Grace of Waheguru making me email some pieces or poems to SR, and it being published in it, the now two 'lost' 'octogenerians' would never have met in this vast world!

**The Sikh Review** - I cannot thank you enough! May SR help many such other souls!

Email: khushhals@gmail.com



## The Turban Triumph: Sikh officer gets US army to bend rules!

The Sikhs of northwestern India have, for centuries, cherished their rich military history. Wearing beards and turbans into combat, they have battled Mughals in Punjab, Afghans near the Khyber Pass and Germans in the bloody trenches of the Somme in WWII.

But when Major Kamaljeet Singh Kalsi, an American Sikh raised in New Jersey, signed up for the US Army, he found that tradition for nothing. Before training, he was told that he would have to give up the basic symbols of his religion: his beard, knee-length hair and turban.



for the US that tradition for nothing. Before training, he was told that he would have to give up the basic symbols of his religion: his beard, knee-length hair and turban.

In good Sikh tradition, he resisted. Armed with petitions and Congressional letters, he waged a two-year campaign that in 2009 resulted in the army granting him a special exception for his unshorn hair, the first such accommodation to a policy established in the 1980s.

Since then, two other Sikhs have won accommodations from the army. But many others have failed. And so now, as he prepares to leave active duty, Major Kalsi, who earned a Bronze Star in Afghanistan, is

waging a new campaign: to rescind those strict rules that he believes have blocked hundreds of Sikhs from joining the military.

“Folks say, ‘If you really want to serve, why don’t you cut your beard?’” said Major Kalsi, a doctor who is the medical director of emergency medical services at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. “But asking a person to choose between religion and country, that’s not who we are as a nation. We’re better than that. We can be Sikhs and soldiers at the same time.”

The more Sikhs wear military, police or firefighter uniforms, Major Kalsi reasoned, the less often Americans will see them as threatening outsiders.

A more nuanced challenge for Sikh recruits is overcoming the argument that uniformity of appearance is essential for “unit cohesion,” the military’s shared sense of purpose and tradition. But Sikhs point to the British, Canadian and Indian militaries, where Sikhs are allowed to wear unshorn hair and beards, as evidence that their articles of faith do not undermine esprit de corps.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Memorial to 1984 – The Third “Ghalughara”!

The foundation stone of a Memorial for the victims of 1984 Sikh ‘genocide’ has been erected in the Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib Complex, New Delhi, adjacent to the Parliament House, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The ceremony coincided with the martyrdom Gurpurab of Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji.

Besides the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee's president, Sr. Avtar Singh Makkar, religious heads of various Gurdwaras (Takhts), Sikh Institutions, Political personalities of different political parties, and a large number of Sikh Sangat were present - to mark the historical day.

Speaking on the occasion Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee's president Sr. Manjit Singh ("GK") said that the memorial would remind the now generation to stand against any injustice by the rulers of the day. DSGMC's general secretary, Sr. Manjinder Singh Sirsa said that the Memorial would a standing tributes to thousands of innocent people, massacred in Delhi and other part of the country in 1984.

While expressing gratitude to the Sikhs across the world for their moral support, Sr. Manjit Singh said that the proposed Memorial would be a symbol of solidarity and communal harmony for generations to come – as also a reminder of the atrocities committed on a minority by its own government.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **The Sikh Coalition wins case for Eye-Specialist wearing Turban**

**U.S. Optometry Board Accommodates Student's Turban, Allows Him to Use Alternative Instruments**

**New York: The National Board of Ex-**

**aminers in Optometry (NBEO) provided Ampreet Singh, a Sikh optometry student, a religious accommodation to use a non-standardized optometry instrument — allowing him to wear his turban — to complete the clinical skills portion of the national licensing examination. Recently, Mr. Singh successfully passed the exam, as well as the clinical skills evaluation, with a near perfect score.**



The national exam, which consists of three parts, requires optometry students to wear a head-mounted binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy instrument (BIO) for the clinical portion. However, Mr. Singh, because of his religiously-mandated turban, was unable to wear the head-mounted BIO. He requested a religious accommodation to wear an alternative but functionally equivalent spectacle-mounted BIO.

**The Sikh Coalition** came forward to defend Mr. Singh. Initially, the NBEO refused to agree to a workable solution. After months of negotiations, the NBEO finally agreed to allow Mr. Singh to wear the spectacle-mounted BIO instrument and graded him on-site through the use of a

teaching mirror and a proctor. This accommodation allowed him to complete the practical portion of his board examination while wearing his turban.

“We applaud the NBEO’s decision to provide Mr. Singh with a suitable accommodation consistent with his religious rights under state and federal law. It is shocking that the hurdle Mr. Singh faced in his career was not a difficult examination or coursework but the initial failure of a national licensing board to accommodate his religious beliefs. This accommodation embraces diversity in the optometry profession and will pave the way for other Sikhs,” said Gurjot Kaur, Staff Attorney.

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## **Sacred Well in Kathmandu Gurdwara cleaned**

### **Work on preservation of wooden structure of Gurdwara Guru Nanak Math underway**

With the historical “khuhi” (well) at a gurdwara in Kathmandu finally cleaned, efforts are now underway to restore the wooden structure of Gurdwara Nanak Math that has been raised on the site believed to be visited by the founder of Sikhism in 1516. The gurdwara is situated on the banks of the Vishnumati river.

**The Sarbat Da Bhala Charitable Trust, headed by Dubai-based businessman SP Singh Oberoi, has undertaken the kar sewa of all the three gurdwaras in Nepal with the help of local Sikhs.**

**Oberoi discovered the gurdwara structure during one of his Kathmandu visits. He took up the issue of its restoration with the Nepal Prime Minister in November last year.**

**“We have been carrying out the kar sewa of a 27-foot deep historical well in another gurdwara. Interestingly, after cleaning, inscriptions of Mool Mantra surfaced on the walls of the well in one of the three gurdwaras in Kathmandu,” he claimed.**

“The Nepal Prime Minister has assured us all possible help towards the ongoing restoration of the structure. He would be looking into possibilities of retrieving the shrine’s vacant land,” said Oberoi.

He said the trust headed by him had also undertaken the construction of a langar hall (community kitchen) in the gurdwara premises as well as that of a 100-room sarai for Sikh pilgrims.

### **About the shrine**

- Guru Nanak Dev is believed to have visited Kathmandu in 1516 on his way back from Tibet.
- He stayed at a place that was later named as Gurdwara Nanak Math.
- It was earlier known as Sangat Bari, Chartbaksh Sthan and Sankha Bari.
- The then King of Nepal donated 200 acres of land in Guru Nanak’s honour.
- Now only five acres of land remains.

[Courtesy: Sr. Daljit Singh, New Delhi]

## Bhag Milkha Bhag: Breathlessly Magnificent

THE CHARM OF WATCHING BIOPICS is that they take you up close to the essence of the real-time character. By converting super-sprinter Milkha Singh's real life into reel, Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, who rose to prominence at the box office with *Rang De Basanti* in 2006, has made a thundering comeback after a not-so-interesting *Delhi 6*. Apart from a gripping storyline, mesmerising acting by Farhan Akhtar (Milkha Singh) and music that will make the adrenaline rush, there are many other interesting features that are worthy of observation. Like Pawan Malhotra's role might not be deemed weighty enough but his portrayal of compassion and hunger to see Milkha soar higher is quite well carried. It is Milkha's coach who narrates the story from scratch during a train journey from Delhi to Chandigarh.

The movie kicks off with Milkha losing a race at the Olympics because his past swings back at the wrong place and the wrong time. A slew of incidents – such as love and his affection for his sister Isri Kaur (Divya Dutta) – invoke in him a passion to leave behind other illegal activities to earn a respectable living. He then joins the Army

and finds the “Flying Sikh” within. The movie showcase how running for Milkha turned into a dream over time and wasn't really a pre-decided journey. Amid all the workouts, running, training at Army camps and the accolades, Milkha buried his past deep in his heart – the shattering consequences of Partition and, at times, the nostalgia about

incidents that might have broken him. He even goes to the extent of sidelining himself from a race in Pakistan.



Punctuated with naïve humour, some scenes invite laughter and rightly equate the sentimental bouts. You might find this inno-

cently funny – in a scene at a pub in Australia, a girl asks Milkha whether he's “relaxing”. Poker-faced, he replies, “No, I'm Milkha Singh.”

Carrying the antics of a typical Sardar, more so the real-Milkha Singh's image, could not have come easy for Akhtar but given the talent he is, he carries it off effortlessly. Although the duration of the movie slips slightly beyond the three-hour mark, you will find it arresting and concise enough to stay put and watch.

[Courtesy: *The Statesman*]