CREATIVE MYSTICISM

GURU NANAK'S PRAGMATIC SPIRITUALITY



NOTE: I did this painting as visual version of the three basic tenets of the Sikh Faith founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 CE): NAAM, DAAN, and ISNAAN. However, in common parlance in which they are known to the people these are: *Kirat Karo* [Earn thy livelihood by the sweat of thy brow]; Vand Chhako [Share your honest earnings with the under-privileged]; and Naam Japo [Meditate of the Holy Name].

• This painting along with my poem [see page 297] on the Holy personage was published in The Tribune.

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DR SS BHATTI



www.whitefalconpublishing.com

CREATIVE MYSTICISM Guru Nanak's Pragmatic Spirituality Dr SS Bhatti



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To explore the depths of inner consciousness and delineate the dynamics of creative mysticism one needs to have profound scholarship and transcendental vision, which Dr SS Bhatti possesses in an ample measure.

Mysticism is the path of spirituality which unfolds psychic levels of being, inaccessible through the senses or the intellect. It stems from a direct, intuitive experience of the divine, and manifests through visions which can be decoded only by the enlightened souls who transcend ordinary consciousness. The domain of the spirit is one, like the one sky overhead. When a mystic is filled with the light of the Supreme Self, the super-sensuous faculty lying dormant in him is awakened. That explains why mystical phenomena occur in the life of realized souls hailing from divergent religious traditions, all over the globe. Yet mysticism is not occultism, but the practice of going beyond mind, of dying while living, and of perceiving the same Self in all. The mystic is in tune with the infinite though he seldom displays his psychic powers. Truth, 'the essence of divinity', dawns on him, and he virtually becomes its embodiment. Guru Nanak Dev was one such mystic who established truth as a value of life, and possessed an aura that had a transformative effect on people. His mysticism was practical, not doctrinaire, profound not puzzling, deep not enigmatic.

Dr Bhatti straddles between the physical and the spiritual planes of existence to describe Guru Nanak Dev's revelation as 'mystically creative and creatively mystical.' To him mysticism is 'a quest for a hidden truth or wisdom', an experience of the Supreme reality in which personal consciousness is transmuted into witnessing consciousness. He explains how to reconcile the Phenomenal and Noumenal aspects of human experience, apply truth to conduct, synthesize science and spirituality, and revel in *Ananda* or bliss that is gained by conjoining *Surat*, consciousness, with *Shabda*, the Word that abides within and without. The prerequisites to *Ananda* are truthful living, adherence to the Eternal Law, sustained Japa or repetition, of Naam or the holy name, and *Dhyana Sadhna*, deep contemplation on God. When spiritual fire, called *Naam-Agni*, by Guru Nanak Dev, is kindled in a person, his accumulated sins are burnt up. As he advances on spiritual path, he communes with the divine, and has ecstatic experiences that are indescribable. He perceives Supreme Light, hears *Anaahat Nada*, unstruck music of the soul, and spontaneously proclaims, 'Wah', an expression of *Vismaad* or divine rhapsody.

Dr Bhatti's familiarity with the esoteric traditions of Siddhas, Naths, Tantrics and Yogis, is evident as he delves into the subject of *kundalini* or serpent power, that sleeps at the base of the spine, and can be awakened by *Dhyana Sadhna* alone. *Dhyana* or meditation is 'psychic endeavour to collect scattered consciousness'. It joins brainwave emissions from right and left hemispheres, thereby creating inner harmony, from which sprouts greater creativity. Dr Bhatti defines creativity as synergy—a three-prong process, 'propelled by an inner compulsion', 'reinforced by an inner conviction', and 'sustained by an inner satisfaction- without favour or fear.' Connectivity with God unfolds the inner potential of a person. While mysticism is 'divine experience', creativity is 'its artistic expression'. Together, they give rise to 'pragmatic spirituality'.

The path of spiritual progress is the path of Truth. Dr Bhatti seems to believe with Henry Bergson, that one must undo the work of the intellect to get at the reality of experience—to know the Ultimate Truth. Intellect has its limitations, though it helps one to enquire into the nature of the Self. It can dispel ignorance but not tame the ego which is the greatest impediment in the spiritual progress of a person. Higher the learning, greater is the ego. 'The mind regains its true health when it begins its journey towards godhead in the unbroken chant: I am nothing, I am nothing'. How true!

Dr Bhatti regards *Gurbani* as a 'revealed word packaged in creative mysticism'. It is not mythology, abstract philosophy or a bundle of prophesies, but an elixir for mankind undergoing an existential crisis. Guru Nanak Dev brought mysticism to 'the doorstep of common man'. His revelation marks a radical departure from the teachings of other mystics in the sense that he emphasized dignity of labour, good moral conduct and selfless service as necessary for the ascension of the soul.

Dr Bhatti's explication of Japuji from an architect's standpoint makes scintillating reading. He calls *Japuji* 'an edifice of the soul' whose quintessential, the *Mula Mantra*, encapsulates supreme wisdom. *Japuji* consists of 38 *Pauris*, spiritual steps that lead one to *Sach Khand*, the Realm of Truth. Its design, structure, and form amply prove that it is not telluric but transcendental. *Japuji* is not to be repeated like a parrot, without contemplating on its meaning, but internalized and put into practice in daily life, so as to remain in god-consciousness. Dr Bhatti woefully laments that God is on sale, and meditation has become a marketable commodity. The so-called man of religion goes to his respective place of worship as if it were 'a Spiritual Mall in his Religion's Downtown'. It is high time to reflect on Guru Nanak Dev's *Bani*, in its true spirit, so as to connect with the One Reality, cultivate noble virtues and enjoy the bliss of being.

Dr Bhatti's Urdu verses on creativity, as rendered into English, and his sonnets, are soaked in spiritual fervour. The book is dotted with many sparkling observations that border on mysticism, like: 'Life is a product of dust commingled with divinity'. 'Space is the female principle. Time is the male principle'. 'Poetry is musical meditation'. 'Spirituality is vertical growth'. 'God is light. Guru is *Shabda* or the holy Word. God is home. Guru is the door'. And so on.

With the objectivity of a scientist, the philosophical depth of a theologian, the skill of an architect, and the diction of a literary person, Dr Bhatti expatiates on mysticism in a unique manner, giving Guru Nanak Dev's *Japuji* a pivotal place in it—'Religion of the élite'. His

approach to the subject is coherent and comprehensive; his method, synoptic; and his conclusions, meaningful. Like an Upanishadic sage he seems to assert – *Satyam Vadishyami* – 'I will speak the truth'.

Jalandhar City, 07 March 2020

—Dr Satish K Kapoor



Formerly British Council Scholar Principal, Lyallpur Khalsa College Registrar, DAV University, Jalandhar





In the year 2000, I received my second PhD on "CREATIVE MYSTICISM – A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japuji" from Panjab University, Chandigarh. My study of Gurbani had been ongoing since early-1980s and seems to be an endless adventure into the World of Spirit. As years roll by and I gain new understanding of life and the world from my compulsive engagement with diverse fields of human endeavour that I have condensed into the Humanities. Art, Science, and Technology, Guru Nanak's Divine Utterances [Dhur ki Bani; literally, straight from The Source] as couched in Sri Guru Granth Sahib continue to reveal new meanings to enrich my outlook and extend my outreach into inter-faith dialogue within the Assembly Hall of my Mind. The stated doctorate was published in bookform by Sardar Manjit Singh Majithia of Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, in 2007, under the title "GURU NANAK'S BANI -Revelation, Mysticism and Creativity". Unfortunately, after his untimely demise, this book has become unavailable [as if it were out of print] though many desirous readers have shown genuine and keen interest in it on the basis of information they had received from different sources, notably, from the comprehensive review of the book written and posted on the Internet by Sardar Pritam Singh Kohli, IAS (retired), former President of Institute Of Sikh Studies (IOSS) Chandigarh. His rare review is reproduced at the end of this volume. The review is 'rare' because the learned author confided in me that it had taken him

almost a year to read and absorb the contents of the book before he could feel comfortable to write it.

In view of this brief exposition highlighting the changed conditions, I thought it fit to publish the book under a new title "*CREATIVE MYSTICISM* – *Guru Nanak's Pragmatic Spirituality*" with some crucial additions.

In the new phrase "CREATIVE MYSTICISM" coined by me way back in late-1990s, the word 'Mysticism' denotes *Experience* while 'Creative' alludes to its *Expression*. I dare say that mine was the first attempt at introducing Creativity in the discourse on Mysticism because Mystics for centuries had stubbornly believed that mystic experience was unique to the individual experiencer and could not be communicated to novitiates or lesser mortals. The popular Indian saying that conveyed this patent inability of transmitting occult knowledge was encapsulated in the hackneyed phraseology "*Mystical experience belongs to a dumb person who has eaten jaggery and knows the taste but cannot tell others what it is like!*" That Guru Nanak Dev proved this popular patent belief to be wrong by his unique communication skills and tell-tale personal example substantiates my thesis that had formed the subject of my second doctorate.

Without wanting to give an impression of self-conceit or selfpraise, I must say that I was the first student of Comparative Religion to introduce 'Creativity' for scholastic investigation of the whys and wherefores of 'Mysticism', and then taking recourse to guidance from Guru Nanak Bani [Sacred Word received from Lord God through Revelation], sought to explode the ancient myth of Mysticism's obdurate incommunicability. My research did not stop there. It inspired me to the point of defining that "Creativity is a never-ending adventure into the realm of the human spirit". I thereby successfully showed Creativity to be a phenomenon and a discipline to convincingly demonstrate that is not a mere human trait. Dilating upon the subject further I could show, as in the present work, the characteristics, principles, etc of Creativity and what benefits accrue from it to the individual who is 'creative'. True to my own definition, what seems to have ended in the year 2000, I find to my pleasant surprise that Creativity in my case is still in the stream of afflatus. Whenever I sit down and reflect, my previous doings shoot

up into new adventure of ideas and I keep on adding to my existing repertoire of Creativity—endlessly. Thus Creativity, for me, has gone well beyond a mere process of generating offbeat ideas to my gaining new insights into the World of Thoughts, Words, and Deeds. While enriching my analytical discernment my tryst with Creativity has expanded my synthetic comprehension—and by virtue of the new power thus acquired I suddenly begin to detect underlying interrelationships and interdependences of innumerable ideas that stretch my versatility to new horizons of human understanding and accomplishment—besides displaying before my inner eye how 'Unity in Diversity' is a palpable reality, and not merely a concept from Metaphysics.

When I reflect on them I mentally travel backwards in Time and reach a point where I am wonderstruck at my own creations-because I continue to regard myself as an ordinary person incapable of generating extraordinary ideas. Perhaps the best and most intriguing of my findings via my Tryst with Creativity is that it helps me to develop and grow [as an unageing young person defying the debility and senility of gerontion] as an individual human person with enriched wherewithal for the Art of Living. However, it does not empower me, or for that matter anyone else touted to be Yogis, to exercise self-control on the Five Foes that lie within me with their unchallenged formidable strength to derail me in my onward march anytime rendering me totally helpless and hapless. On this occult subject, Guru Nanak Dev has passed the final and ineluctable judgement: Five Inner Foes [Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride] can never be vanquished by any method or praxis whatsoever, including the much-hyped Patanjali Yoga, except through Lord's grace that He grants to the rarest of rare souls by His own inscrutable will.

Hindu Mythology has convincing examples of the stated subject. Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka who had memorised the Four Vedas was the most celebrated devotee of Lord Shiva, possessed all the powers that *Siddhis* [miraculous powers developed by Yoga and occult powers granted by high self-discipline] could impart but yet could not subdue his *Egotism* [Pride] that eventually became the cause for his ridiculous fiasco. Sage Parashara could not control his *libido* and had sex with Satyavati, the young fisher woman, although he had the powers to still the waters

of Jamuna river to turn the boat into a steady master-bed, cause a solar eclipse for privacy, create fragrance to end the foul smell of fish, and convince the unwilling lady that he being a high-caste Brahmin had by birth acquired the divine right to violate the scriptural prescription to have sex with a low-caste female. She eventually gave birth to Ved Vyasa [One who split the original Veda into four volumes, for it was thus convenient to teach them to his disciples]. Maharishi Durvasa of Mahabharata's fame was famous for being short-tempered [in olden days the railway coaches carrying petrol had this inscription: Highly Inflammable; not to be Loose Shunted], even though he was an incarnation of Lord Shiva. He was so awfully jittery that he would fly into a rage at the slightest provocation-and then curse his frightened victims. It is said that Lord Krishna's entire family was annihilated by Durvasa's curse when the former's sons played on him a prank on the bank of River Jamuna. He cursed the young boys when they had brought one of them with a padded-up belly and mischievously asked the sage to predict the sex of the baby-to-be-born.

At least in one case in which scientific evidence does exist, Sigmund Freud, Father of Modern Psychology, has unequivocally asserted that Libido [Sex Urge] can never be sublimated. Guru Nanak Dev was the first [and so far the last] Prophet of the World to identify this inviolable truth and, therefore, prescribe a householder's life by strictly discountenancing asceticism and monastic life as a prerequisite to attaining salvation [*Mukti*]. These examples should suffice to drive home the point I am trying hard to make: Experience and development of Mysticism and Creativity are parallel pursuits with their own solemn benefits, but they do not generate power in the individual to control his baser instincts as noted above.

Let me begin my Introduction to the New Book by my Urdu *Qit'a* [Quatrain or 4-line verse] that I have composed to convey Guru Nanak's divine message to all peoples of the world in poetic capsule as my tacit tribute to the World's Greatest Prophet. To compose the quatrain, I have used the eight letters, as they constitute the name "Guru Nanak" and are written in Urdu script. The Urdu original, its Romanized version along with English rendering, should suffice

to convince you of my undiminished interest in the understanding of *Gurbani* to the extent Guru Nanak himself grants me the grace to do.

گریباں میں واہیگورو رکھنے و ا لا جسے نامِ حق اِک نوائے کرم تھی پیام اُس نے خالق کا سب کو سُنایا دِلوں میں بھرا سوزِ عشقِ حقیقق

He who had housed God in his heart's dominion To him Lord's Holy Name was the Sound of Grace He declaimed the Lord God's message to everyone He gifted divine love's warmth to the human race

My next point is addressed to those who are convinced that Religion is the silliest thing invented by the cunning among humans for those gullible millions who have been doomed never to walk without crutches. Those who think that they are as rational as many Scientists pretend to be, unfortunately, hold a similar opinion. I am saying so because, to my understanding and experience, Science and Religion are complimentary; *not* opposed ways of apprehending Ultimate Reality. In my case, for instance, my faith in Religion progressively deepens as Science makes new advancements [which I always keep abreast of]—and continues to do so.

In sharp contradistinction to the foregoing view and unlike Karl Marx's myopic view, Religion is not opium for the masses because Communism that he had so studiously developed and propagated worldwide fell flat on its face in just 73 years and in the euphoria of their historic victory the first thing that the people starved of religion's opium did was to re-install the statues of their favourite saints and apostles in Moscow's public squares. Why? Opium of the masses had since long become chewing gum for armchair philosophers of Communism.

A human being is constituted of three entities: Body, Mind, and Soul, which require nourishment different in kind for each of them: Food for the Body to engage in deeds; Healthy thoughts and words for the Mind to mull and plan a course of action; and God-remembrance for the Soul to recharge psycho-spiritual batteries for optimal living by engagement in socially-beneficent activities. You may be a theist, an atheist or an agnostic—and may not know that all your virtues derive from divinity—the fact remains that beginning with your name all the rituals and rites in life are determined and guided by Religion.

Since the sharpest and the most unsettling critique of Religion constantly comes from the so-called Scientists, I am naming three worldfamous celebrities: A Theist; an Atheist, and an Agnostic. Newton was a THEIST, and his first name "Isaac" was drawn from the Bible. ISAAC NEWTON spent more time of his life on Theology than on Science. He wrote about 1.3 million words on biblical subjects. The biblical "Isaac" was the only son of Abraham by his wife Sarah. The prediction of his birth was amusing to the couple because they were very old. God gave them the name Isaac for their son, which means one who laughs. The name "Abraham" means "a father of many nations". Abraham is the common patriarch of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc.

STEPHEN HAWKING, the celebrated physicist, was a stubborn ATHEIST who declared that "There is no God. No one created the universe and no one directs our fate." The name "STEPHEN" means "crown", more precisely "that which surrounds".

ALBERT EINSTEIN did not believe in a personal God who concerns Himself with fates and actions of human beings, a view which he described as naïve. His first name "Albert" means "Noble, bright". Einstein clarified that, "I am not an atheist", I prefer to call myself an AGNOSTIC, or a "religious non-believer." When he was a boy, Einstein lovingly studied the Bible, he sensed no contradiction between Catholicism and Judaism, he stopped eating pork, and he wrote little songs to God and sang them as he walked home from school. But at the age of twelve, by reading Science books, he abruptly abandoned all of his Religious beliefs. However, he kept a "holy curiosity" for the mysteries and wonders of Nature. Some wit has aptly defined the soul-gnawing duality that perpetually pesters a "religious non-believer". An Agnostic is a person who assertively says that "There is no God" and, in the same breath, hastens to add that "Mary is His Mother!" The word AGNOSTICISM was first publicly coined in 1869 at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in London by TH Huxley, a British biologist, who was also a self-avowed champion of the Darwinian Theory of Evolution—and loved to call himself "Darwin's Bull Dog". He coined the term as a suitable label for his own position. "It came into my head as suggestively antithetical to the 'Gnostic' of Church history who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant."

* * *

Religion per se is not as bad as the atheist-in-you might imagine and doggedly insist. You can see this fact from the word "RELIGION" that was derived from the Greek language, meaning "to re-unite with the Logos" which Gurbani calls SHABDA. Just as Science has presumed to show [and patted its own back in doing so] that the Universe came into being through the Big Bang of Matter, Religion professes that this Big Bang had occurred due to the Word [Shabda] through which Lord God had pronounced His Edict-Fiat or Hukm in the Cosmic Void. The resulting Sound has been named by the Indian Mystics 'OM' or 'OANKAR'. The entire exercise aimed at realising this inviolable fundamental truth boils down to the conjoining of Soul-Consciousness [SURT] with the Word [SHABDA] via the DHUN [Melody] produced by the chanting of 'OM' or 'OANKAR'. Underlying their apparent differences caused by opposed methodologies of the two ways of apprehending Reality there yet exist uncanny complementarities between Science and Religion. Science explores the 'Measurable' Outer OBJECTIVE World of Matter. Religion seeks to understand the 'Immeasurable' Inner SUBJECTIVE World of Mind. The Method of Science is to "Observe what exists, Measure its physical dimensions, Hypothesise what is probable, and then in laboratory Experiment" to corroborate the supposed or hypothesised Truth. The Method of Religion is to "Hearken the Word, Believe in God, Love all creation and creatures, and then Experience the dear delight of understanding Truth-which is a Primary Attribute of The (Sole) Creator of the Universe, and all forms of life and inanimate things in it."

Interestingly, both Religion and Science focus on (Mother) NATURE. In Science, Nature is the Mother of all Laws and Materials—and all Methods are derived and developed from her as *The* Source. It explores and finds Truth for its own sake, outside the realm of what we call human values rooted in metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics but yet Science serves Humanity and advances the world through Technology. In Religion, Nature is the Manifest Might of Lord God. Guru Nanak Dev has used for Nature the Arabic word "Oudrat" which actually has that connotation i.e. the Manifest Might of Lord God. The problem arises when the Scientist refuses to accept that anything could exist outside or beyond that which can be apprehended by the five senses and reckoned by the relevant tools of measurement invented by Technology. For Religion, there is another world that actually exists but lies beyond the perceptible limits of the physical World of Body which is peopled with innumerable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. This is the World of Spirit that cannot be apprehended by the five conventional senses but never dies just the same because it is not dependent on the Body for its eternal existence.

Be that as it may, just as Fanaticism of the Religionist can never stop the advancement of Science by declaring that its be-all and end-all is *Materialism*, Intellectual Arrogance of the Scientist cannot wish away Religion as myth or superstition concerning God and call Him the fantastic [if stupid] creation of the human mind.

Oddly enough, though Religion in one form or other was always there, it had produced more schizophrenics or split personalities than wholesome human beings as expected of a system touted to be leading to God-realisation—which, in the ultimate analysis and well-knit synthesis, is a state of Consciousness that makes Mind 'Whole' by collection of its countless 'Parts' strewn around due to life's constant stumbling in the overwhelming darkness of ignorance. The priests had mislead and the rulers in connivance with them exploited the masses to the hilt to sustain and maintain their joint supremacy which, in India, survived and was strengthened through the chequered course of the country's history by the dubious sanction and support of the ancient scriptures—either misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted. The policy of "divide and rule" attributed to the English rulers was actually the creation of our own perverted genius. We divided the society in every possible way at various levels: caste-wise; linguistically, by calling Sanskrit "Deva Bhasha" and keeping it well guarded from the masses, four Varnas, four ashrams, and so forth. Imbalance caused by selfish thinking and strategies of the vested interests created widespread psycho-social imbalance which did not even spare the master minds. Their self-induced perversion has survived all invasions and aborted all well-meaning attempts at psycho-social reforms. Religions other than Sanatana Dharma within India and their Semitic counterparts elsewhere in the world fared no better in the ultimate sense of the word. They have studiously promoted monastic life exclusively for the sake of self-discovery and God-realisation with the result that there are innumerable scatter-brains—and the human consciousness is no longer one organic thinking-feeling whole but a mischievous generator of wayward awareness torn asunder and its smithereens so wantonly strewn around here and there that it is well-nigh impossible to restore this unique human faculty to a single-psyche entity.

Since this entire catastrophe had erupted from Religion-whether you know it or not; and like it or not-Guru Nanak Dev set out on his God-assigned mission to help our "Collective Unconscious" regain its organic wholeness that the Rishis of yore had actually experienced at personal level, and desired it to be used by the entire humankind in terms of what Guru Dev Nanak has called: Sarbat da Bhala [Humanity's General Weal]. With a farsighted and comprehensive Master Plan for the holistic amelioration of the human condition globally, Guru Nanak Dev attacked the problem of widespread prejudices and superstitions by going to the mentors of various religious beliefs, sects, and cults who, to his flawless assessment, had caused them in the first place-misleading millions of peoples of the world. For this purpose, he travelled 28,000 kilometres, largely on foot-east, west, north and south-in over 25 years in four Missionary Odysseys called Udasis far beyond India's national borders. In his unprecedented case, it was the Well that reached the Thirsty Souls to quench their ages-old thirst rather the other way round as had for centuries been believed to be the unquestioned proverb. Rather than wait for the slow and steady Evolution of Spiritual Awakening in the Homo sapiens species, the Greatest Prophet of the World introduced what I call psycho-emotional Mutation to bring

about instant illumination of the Inner [SUBJECTIVE] World of Mind. His method was rooted in Divine Theatrics—my coinage for an audio-visual system that swiftly drew attention of the seekers of Truth and sustained it long enough for further instruction and willing imbibing. In doing so, the Guru successfully delivered God's message to suffering humanity with dogged persistence and gentle persuasion to help it sink into the societal consciousness to ameliorate its pitiable condition. With his untiring efforts, the Guru brought the Love and Light of his Revelation to the doorstep of the lowliest of the lowly internationally—and instantly illuminated the dark dungeon of his mind sunk in ignorance, inertia, and superstition.

* * *

Guru Nanak Dev founded new Theology that Lord God had revealed to him with the express understanding and instruction to spread its message far and wide. His is Revealed religion, *not* a rehashing of Vedic philosophy and Islamic doctrine as most scholars erroneously believe and propagate. Since the word 'religion' has earned widespread revulsion and hatred because priests had for centuries been misusing power in connivance with the ruling class to exploit the masses, as noted before, I had coined in late-1990s the term "Creative Mysticism" as a substitute, especially for the study and exposition of the Guru's Theism. I prefer the expression 'Sikh Faith' or '*Sikhi*' to 'Sikhism'. 'Sikhism' belittles the historic significance of the world's youngest and most dynamic religion. As you all know an "ism" is a suffix used to form abstract nouns signifying condition, or system, and in this world "isms" are galore.

What I have shared with you may not find ready resonance but nevertheless it is my holistic view of Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation and *Gurbani*—which is experiential, *not* scholarly. However, at best, mine is essentially an interpretation like innumerable other points of view generated by devotees, scholars, historians, and linguists through the centuries. Before proceeding further, I must sound a caution. However brilliant the description of a thing it can never be the thing described. To support this queer standpoint I give you three quotes from *Gurbani*. Eivad oocha hovai koye Tis ooche kow jaanai soye

He alone who is as high as He is Can get to know how high He is

[Japuji Sahib: Pauri 24]

Jaisi matt dey(i) taisa pargaas Parbrahmu karta abinaas

As he endows intelligence so is the light of comprehension Inaccessible yet remains the Creator beyond all destruction [Sukhmani Sahib: Ninth Ashtapadi; Eighth Pauri]

> Aapu apni budh(i) hai jeti Barnat bhin bhin tuhi teti

As is the extent of the intellect that people possess Their descriptions of Thee differ in what they discuss [Patshahi 10: Kabiyo Baach Benti: Chaupai]

INFERENCE: Everything [including Love] is a means to the same end i.e. returning to *The Source*. Man's amazing inventions and Nature's awesome forces put together cannot get anybody up and out there without God's willing grace that falls upon the exclusive seeker of truth who has adopted Love as compulsory language of mortal life and its inordinately long journey.

Guru Nanak Dev had full grasp of the incredibly tedious problem that had sprung up from a multitude of beliefs and counter-beliefs complicated by the unending cold war of theists, atheists, and agnostics, who were under the unwritten joint command of the priests and the rulers worldwide. Therefore, right at the outset, he used the Numeral One thereby packaging all the 330-million-strong pantheon of gods and goddesses as well as the gods of other World Religions into what is an indivisible "Unicity" [not 'unity' because unity is a plural with a minimum of two]. Next he turned OM into OANKAR from an abstract symbol to the Primal Person as a pulsating Divine Being who performs the three interrelated

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and interdependent functions of Creation, Preservation, and Dissolution all by Himself without any help whatsoever from assistants and regents. Discountenancing the abstract principle of truth shrouded in the concept of Brahman of the Sanatana Dharma, he presented Lord God in His Sarguna Saroop [Attributive Form] as Karta Purkh [Primal Creative Person]. As may be seen by the discerning seekers of Truth it is easy to identify oneself with God as Karta Purkh than with an abstract principle of Truth. Therefore, the Guru's was a sure-shot way of weaning the vagabond mass mind from ceremonial idol worship towards an ardent adoration of Ik Oankar, resulting in exclusive devotion to The Creator rather His creation and creatures. In doing so, he dispensed with the need for a human [subject to the laws of the mortal world like any other human being] spiritual preceptor by installing Shabda-Guru in the sanctum sanctorum of Mind. He made the message embodied in his Revelation by the historic proclamation: Ik Oankar. By placing the Numeral "1" before "Oankar" he made his Theology incredibly simple because stress on it means that everything is within God, issues from Him, stages the mind-boggling Drama of creation [His Sarguna Form], and returns to Him as He Himself wills and commands. The perennial significance of numeral "1" is that it is inseparable, even though invisible, from the connotation of each attribute of Lord God following it as delineated in the Mool Mantra. For example, the expression "Karta Purkh" means that it is He, the "1", who is the Creator Primal Person; the attribute "Fearless", by the same token, alludes again to the One who is the Cause Maker, the Cause, and its countless Effects in the created universe, and so on.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, the Numeral One was enough for evolved souls to talk and hear about God as the Cause-Maker, the First Cause, and its countless Effects as they become manifest in a mindboggling variety of creatures and creation. For the next level of humans, however, *Ik Oankar* is a complete *Granth*. This Sacred Word [*Shabda*] suggested by "*OANKAR*" is followed by the *Mool Mantra* [also spelled *Mul Mantra*] which, to all intents and purposes, is a full-fledged exposition of *Ik Oankar*. By the same token, *Japuji Sahib* is the exegesis of the *Mool Mantra* and, by logical extension, all that which is couched in 1430 pages of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, is an interpretation of *Japuji Sahib*.

The *Mool Mantra* is quoted below in *Gurmukhi* [literally, from the Guru's Mouth] script and in its English rendering.

E

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ik-o^Nkaar sa<u>t</u> naam kar<u>t</u>aa pura<u>kh</u> nir<u>bh</u>a-o nirvair akaal moora<u>t</u> ajoonee sai<u>bh</u>a^N gur parsaa<u>d</u> [The Source for Romanised version of the sacred text is Internet]

MOOL MANTRA

[THE SEED-WORD]

[IK OANKAR] G-O-D [Generator-Operator-Destroyer]

IS

ONE

All-Inclusive, All-Pervasive Truth, the Unchanging Reality Transcendent Being One may Name Him thus Intrepid, Uninimical Imperishable Icon Beyond the Cycle of Birth and Death Self-Existent By the Grace of God, the *Guru* This Creed is proclaimed

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॥ ਜਪੁ ॥

Jap

Contemplating His Glory by a ceaseless Chant

**

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥१॥

aa<u>d</u> sach jugaa<u>d</u> sach hai <u>bh</u>ee sach naanak hosee <u>bh</u>ee sach

[Source for Romanized Version from Jap to ...ta ha-umai kahai na ko-ay is Internet]

Truth was He before the birth of Time Truth has He been since Time He bore Truth is He, Nanak, even now sublime And Truth shall He be evermore

ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਰ ॥ ਚੁਪੈ ਚੁਪ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਲਾਇ ਰਹਾ ਲਿਵ ਤਾਰ ॥ ਭੁਖਿਆ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਭਾਰ ॥ ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥१॥

sochai soch na hova-ee jay sochee la<u>kh</u> vaar chupai chup na hova-ee jay laa-ay rahaa liv <u>t</u>aar <u>bhukh</u>i-aa <u>bhukh</u> na u<u>t</u>ree jay bannaa puree-aa <u>bh</u>aar sahas si-aa<u>n</u>paa la<u>kh</u> hohi <u>t</u>a ik na chalai naal **kiv sachi-aaraa ho-ee-ai kiv koorhai <u>t</u>utai paal hukam rajaa-ee chal<u>n</u>aa naanak li<u>kh</u>i-aa naal**

Pauri-One reproduced above in original appears in my English translation given below.

A life-time of ablutions can't purify Nor sustained spells of silence qualify Nor endless feasting of the worlds satisfy Nor a hundred thousand wits ever grasp it? How, then, to be Truthful; this guile! How smash it? Nanak, "Submission to His Edict-Fiat as He is Master of His Will" Is the Inviolable Divine Writ, the one Revealed in Original!

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Four Ways of God-Realisation that were propagated and perpetuated in the Indian religious tradition, as noted in the first four lines of the **Pauri-One**, were right away discountenanced by the Guru. And he does not stop at that. He goes further to enunciate the new method that he had received in his Revelation: "Submission to His Edict-Fiat who is Master of His Will". Prerequisite to God-Realisation is to become Sachiar or Truthful. That is why the Guru has declared that "Truth is the highest but higher than Truth is Truthful Living—which is the approved lifestyle of a Sachiar.

Widespread confusion exists between two key terms, namely, *Reza* and *Hukm*, used by the Guru. Many scholars have used the two words interchangeably which, in my considered opinion, is far off the mark and, therefore, blatantly misleading. *Reza* is Persian word for Will; *Hukm* is Arabic word for Edict-Fiat. God's Will is inscrutable. Edict-Fiat is the operative part of God's Will which cannot be comprehended by any means whatsoever. That is why the Guru has said that in order to be Truthful, the prerequisite is "*Submission to His Edict-Fiat who is Master of His Will*".

This point becomes crystal clear in the next Pauri in which the Guru deals exclusively with the divine power of "*Hukm*" as the operative part of God's Will.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਅਹਿ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਇਕਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦਾ ਭਵਾਈਅਹਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥੨॥

hukmee hovan aakaar hukam na kahi-aa jaa-ee hukmee hovan jee-a hukam milai vadi-aa-ee hukmee u<u>t</u>am neech hukam li<u>kh dukh</u> su<u>kh</u> paa-ee-ah iknaa hukmee ba<u>kh</u>sees ik hukmee sa<u>d</u>aa <u>bh</u>avaa-ee-ah hukmai an<u>d</u>ar sa<u>bh</u> ko baahar hukam na ko-ay naanak hukmai jay buj<u>ih</u>ai <u>t</u>a ha-umai kahai na ko-ay **Pauri-Two** that appears above in original is given in English translation below.

His Edict-Fiat bears forth bodies, yet inscrutable remain His Edict-Fiat creates souls, and all status bestows By His Edict-Fiat are high and low, pleasure and pain By His Edict-Fiat one is set free, another comes and goes By His Edict-Fiat is life's bondage for one and all Those who know His Edict-Fiat, Nanak, are ego-free and humble

To offer the sacrament of his Creative Mysticism to one and all, Guru Nanak has distilled his Revelation its simplest and essential form. The condensed version has become world-renowned as his Three-Prong Psycho-Spiritual Formula: (1) *Kirat Karo*, (2) *Vand Chhako*, and (3) *Naam Japo*. Based on Personal Ethics, Social Ethics, and Psychological Ethics, respectively, they furnish Food for the Body, Food for the Mind, and Food for the Soul, as noted before.

Ancient Indian religious and spiritual philosophy had been condensed into *Dharma, Artha, Kama,* and *Moksha.* The four items of this standard prescription translate, respectively, into Cosmic Moral Law; Wherewithal of cash and kind topped by Money; all desires crowned by Sex or *Libido*; and Freedom from birth and death or Salvation. However, many fundamental distinctions exist between Guru Nanak's Revelation and contents of the Vedas and the Upanishads which have been ignored by scholars, historians, and linguists to jump to the conclusion that *Gurbani* is a rehashing of *Sanatana Dharma* thought wedded to the tenets of Islam. I am citing just one example here to clear this moot point: It is the idea of Salvation [*Mukti*] by Yoga which Guru Nanak has unequivocally rejected. Instead it is clearly stressed that

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੂ ਦੁਆਰੂ ॥

Karmi aavai kapda nadri mokhu duaru

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Good life is earned by good deeds, but Salvation is received by no other means or praxis *except* God's grace.

Believing otherwise would mean that the seeker of Truth arrogates to himself the power to capture God by breathing exercises and unnatural twists and turns of the body as taught in the much-touted Yoga.

Let me close this part of the Introduction by my Urdu Ode to Guru Nanak in which I entreat his benevolence for completing this bookproject successfully.

> نانک اگر کرم کرے منزل نصیب ہو درگاہِ خالق جہاں دل کے قریب ہو پی کر پیالے نام کے مستی ہو سَرتدی نفرت مٹے ہر آدمی اپنا حبیب ہو

By Nanak's grace is achieved ultimate destination God's court charges the heart with divine battery Drinking cups of *Naam* gives lasting intoxication With hatred gone dawns widespread camaraderie

* * *

MEETING WITH PIR DASTGIR

I am sharing here with you what transpired between Guru Nanak and Pir Dastgir during their historic discussion in his court in Baghdad. This anecdote is intended to show the Guru's truly exceptional genius in answering esoteric questions to the entire satisfaction of the enquirer by drawing upon simple examples from everyday life that anyone could relate easily to the subject of discussion. His unique distinction lies in the little-known fact that he seldom resorted to the ontological meanderings of metaphysics to explain problems that pester every anxious soul. The Guru's method was to begin with the concrete to provide the questioner with firm foothold in the ground from which discussion would ensue and then with polite persuasion involve him in what in American parlance is called problem-solving. The concrete reference had empirical evidence to support and corroborate the abstract that the Guru would presently scale and help the questioner experience the heady thrill of being up there with him for a while. I call this unprecedented psycho-spiritual tool for discourse and discussion on matters spiritual the "Logic of Soul" that transcends the tangled mesh of intellectual intricacies and instantly awakens the slumbering intuition of the enquirer.

I have reasons to believe that the three extremely difficult questions posed by Pir Dastgir were answered in characteristic directness which was the hallmark of Guru Nanak Dev's inter-faith dialogue in which Spirituality and Science were spontaneously drawn into facile compatibility. This is what, to my unswerving conviction, makes the Guru's New Theology "CREATIVE MYSTICISM" [my coinage] in which 'Mysticism' is *Experience* and 'Creativity' is its *Expression*. It belies the centuries-old belief of mysticism being "Religion of the Élite" because its experience was a dumb person's taste of jaggery eaten by him which he knew but could not communicate much less explain to anyone. From my study and understanding of Guru Nanak Dev's Life and his *Bani*, I personally stand in no need absolutely of any proof to declare that he, indeed, is the Greatest Prophet of the World—the timelessuniversal truth of his divine utterances was crystal clear because there was no schism between his thoughts, words, and deeds which he amply demonstrated in *Sahj* during workday existence as his holistic lifestyle steeped in what he called "*Naam Khumari*".

* * *

It was early morning when Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana reached the outskirts of Baghdad, and time for *Namaaz* [one of the five daily prescribed Muslim prayers] when the muezzin was to recite aloud the Islamic call to worship. Contrary to the established system of the Islamic country's religious tradition, Guru Nanak began singing hymns to the glory of Lord God while Mardana played the Rebab. When the Guru uttered the sacred word '*Satnam*' in gay abandon divine enchantment descended on the city. According to Bhai Gurdas, it was pure bliss that calmed people's minds into self-absorbing entrancement. The news spread in the city like wild fire. The truth which showed up was that where there is *amrit* (ambrosia or nectar), there poison is also present. Sandalwood trees are beautiful but poisonous snakes cling to them in mesmerised attachment.

This was why those unused to such ambrosial drink found the Guru's hymn-singing a grave threat to their beliefs; in fact, a sacrilege, and they started objecting and arguing about the kirtan. In the verbal mêlée that ensued, the fanatics threw stones at the divine duo while others surrendered their minds to the mellifluous strains of sublime music. The two 'heretics' were thus brought to the court of Pir [High Priest] Dastgir who was both the temporal and spiritual lord of the city. He was seated on his throne while the Guru stood facing him, surrounded by ordinary people. Dastgir said that if the Guru could answer his three questions he would be honoured; but if he failed he would receive punishment. He then asked, "O Hindi Faqir, why were you singing such depraved and immoral verses on the holy land of Baghdad? Don't you know that, according to Shariat (Islamic law), music is forbidden? What kind of Faqir you are and what is your background? Music arouses libidinal passions, and fires the craving for bodily pleasures, which is why it is banned in Islam."

Guru Nanak Dev coolly responded, "Music is a powerful instrument of both good and evil. It melts the hearts and can thus be a vehicle of spiritual inspiration. God, the matchless musician, has created music as cosmic melody in the gentle rustle of the reeds, breeze-swaying plants, murmur of the stream, the gushing of torrents, the humming of bees, and countless other ways that constitute the awesome orchestra of Nature. Love of music is integral to human nature. Whenever a person is happy or alone, he sings or hums a tune as a befitting outcry of his soul.

"Why not use the natural characteristics of music express profounder values and to achieve higher goals. Why not sing holy songs in praise of Allah, the Lord of the Universe! This kind of music attunes the individual soul to the Universal Soul. The corrupt passions of mind are thus directed to sublime channels. As such, music can be used as an aid to spiritual upliftment."

Pir Dastgir was deeply impressed by the Guru's exposition underscoring the virtues of music unravelled by him in its sacred dimension. He and his followers who wanted to lynch the Guru for the alleged crime against Islamic tradition at once became his admirers and friends.

Humbled in the pride of his learning, Pir Dastgir asked, "O Hindi Faqir, since long three questions have been pestering my mind in both in and out of meditation: **First Question**: If God (Khuda/Allah) is the creator of the universe, who created God in the first place? What was there before God appeared on the cosmic scene? **Second Question**: Where does God live? **Third Question**: What does God do?"

Guru Nanak said, "Your questions are very valuable, but difficult too. Therefore, I want you to show me all the pearls, diamonds, rubies, and jewels that you have in your treasury to enable me to answer your first question."

With the valuables brought to his presence, the Guru looked quizzically at Pir Dastgir and said, "Pir, I want you to count these precious stones one by one."

Each time, the Pir started count from 1; he was stopped by the Guru who declared that the count was wrong. Puzzled, the Pir asked

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if that was so, how he should correct his counting. He was told to start the count before the Numeral "1".

Pir replied nervously, "How can I count prior to "1". Before "1", there is *nothing*. Therefore, I must start with numeral 1." Guru Nanak said, "Yes, indeed, there is *nothing* before "1". Only God is an Absolute One, and all things with their prescribed counts originate from Him. Lord is the seed, the origin, the Primal Person." Following this line of his Revelation, the Guru recited the *Mool Mantra*, hearing which the Pir acquiesced in the soulful bliss of instant illumination.

Now the Pir posed the **Second Question**, "Hey, Nanak, this seed who is the Creator of this universe, was there before and will be there after it, but where does He live? Where should we search Him? In Islam, it is said that He lives in seven skies above the earth."

On the Guru's asking, a pot full of milk was brought instantly for dealing with the Pir's second question. Looking curiously at it, he said, "Pir, there is something in it." When on repeated assertions the Pir failed to notice anything, the Guru said that there was butter in it. The Pir was convinced; however, he said that butter is extracted by a long, *prescribed* process.

Guru Nanak then explained that just as each drop of milk contains butter and firewood contains the fire, God dwells in all animate and inmate things created by Him. But this can be discerned only by following the *prescribed* religious praxis taught by the *Shabda-Guru*. His mystery can be unravelled only by the divine light that God Himself by His grace bestows upon the seeker of truth.

The Pir then asked his third and last question, "Nanak, what does such omnipotent God do? What is His profession?"

Guru Nanak smiled and replied, "Do what you actually should do, leave your throne and walk down to the floor of the court. Instead I will occupy your throne. You can then ask as many questions as you want and I will answer them all to your entire satisfaction." Pir Dastgir came down and sat where the Guru had been standing and Guru Nanak went up and took his seat on the throne. Dastgir asked, "Nanak, now, tell me quickly what God does." The Guru replied, "Dastgir, can't you *see* that this is what God does? He brings down the person sitting on the throne and commands him to sit on the floor, and seats in his place the one who was hitherto standing on the floor!" God changes the beggar into a king, and the king into a beggar.

The Guru then expanded his examples to encompass many different cases and conditions as noted below:

God transforms stupid idiots into men of enormous wisdom; and vice versa. In His divine sport, Lord assumes so many forms, and plays several diverse roles, and yet remains detached from His countless creatures and creations. He makes the crying laugh, and the laughing cry. God fills what is empty, and empties what is full. He Himself expands the expanse of His *Maya* [Divine Sport: World of Relative, *not* Absolute, Reality], and He Himself joyously beholds it. On the one hand, He makes people die; on the other, He brings the dead back to life. God makes losing business profitable and the profitable incur unexpected losses.

This is His task. This *is* His profession. No one knows, nor can ever know, the state and extent of the Lord even though He is omnipresent. The best we humans can then do is to cast off all doubts and pray for God's mercy and blessings by total surrender of our ego at His feet through the guidance and grace of the *Shabda-Guru*.

With all his doubts cleared and his ego completely vanquished, Pir Dastgir's eyes welled up with tears of profound contentment, wondrous joy, and overbrimming gratitude. In a gesture of historic thanks-giving, he had a board fixed on the throne where Guru Nanak had been seated and furnished it with this inscription: "*Rab-ul-Majeed Hazrat Baba Nanak*" [Baba Nanak, the Blessed Messenger of God]. The royal seat consecrated by Guru Nanak was called "*Amar Singhasan*" [Throne Eternal], and still exists in Baghdad.
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Having given you the background of this book, I would now like to share with you two of my short essays to corroborate the everexpanding learning over the years that my sustained and studious investigation of *Gurbani* has bestowed upon me. These are: *What is Knowledge? Want a Proof for the Existence of God?*

I dare say that such an offbeat gumption of an esoteric subject would not have been possible without my understanding and experience gained from the assiduous application of the tools of Theory, Practice, Research, and Pedagogy to the four major fields of human endeavour that I have identified and named as "the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology" vis-à-vis the parallel scrutiny of Religion, Culture, and Mythology—in which Gurbani figures prominently. I have every hope that if you read the two essays with the rapt attention that they deserve you will be far better equipped to grasp the subtle import of Divine Message that Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation carries in terms of what I have tried to delineate and present in the present tome.

This book is based on my second PhD titled "CREATIVE MYSTICISM – A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japuji". It was honoured by Chandigarh's Sri Guru Har Krishan Educational Society as the Best Doctorate done in 2000 at the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University in Chandigarh.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

INFORMATION is, at best, a collection of names of people, places, things, events, tasks, and so forth. Its usefulness is limited to navigation i.e. it helps you find your way about in the world disordered by human arrogance, maverick ambition, irrepressible lust, and unbridled greed.

When you think you are "educated" you are actually merely literate i.e. you are able to speak, understand, read, and write a language or languages; comprehend customs, procedures, activities, and much else that you encounter during workaday existence. In other words, you acquire a certain SKILL or skills to earn a livelihood, and to transact everyday business successfully.

The so-called specialised or higher education gives you "special" or "higher" skill(s) whereby you are relatively more successful than others in earning a more lucrative and better livelihood. But, ironically, the more successful you are the more tricks of the trade you acquire until cunningness becomes your habit of the mind i.e. a compulsive view and way of manipulative lifestyle. Your desire to know how to be successful in life, in the worldly sense of the word, becomes so encrusted with the grime of the world that your attitude, temperament, behaviour, outlook, and actions get imbued with greed sooner than you realise until it is too late to retrace your footsteps!

You may become a great scientist, artist, statesman, bureaucrat, sportsman, philosopher, businessman, author, journalist, or some such person, and even be recognised and honoured for being so, but the baser instincts [Ego, Lust, Anger, Attachment, and Greed] lurk inside you, behind your "cultured" and "civilised" demeanour. In other words, you are a master of one or more skills, in the superlative sense, but with a Greed-polluted mind, or Lust-sullied sensibility, or Ego-contaminated attitude you are pitiably less than a *human being*. A mind dirtied by any form of worldliness can never enter the Realm of Knowledge.

What is usually mistaken to be Knowledge is a package of Applied Skills, held aloft by tricks of the trade. Applied Skills are no doubt useful in problem-solving, but they do not exercise any control whatsoever on your baser instincts: Ego, Lust, Anger, Attachment, and Greed.

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Self-Control comes from Knowledge, which differs from Information and Skills, not only in degree but also in kind.

The four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing are applied by the Philosopher to the process of thinking to churn out a heady Metaphysics. The Scientist adds to the recipe the power of observation; the poet modifies the cerebral cuisine by pouring imagination into it! The combined efforts and occupations of the two professionals do bring about a change, but only in the Objective or Material World, while the Subjective or Psychological World remains unchanged. Just the same this "outside" success gives them [and you who blindly follow them] a fraudulent sense of achievement, fertile enough for the birth of Arrogance, Dishonesty, and Licentiousness.

KNOWLEDGE begins in orienting the Mind to the Inviolable Reality of God. Ironically, it is accessible more easily to the illiterate who is innocent than the highly educated who is incorrigibly cunning! Rama, Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha, Nanak, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Muhammad are acknowledged doyens of Knowledge because their Minds are imbued in the Love of God. They are the ultimate refuge even of the most cunning among the Worldly Wise!

INFORMATION and SKILLS are necessary for survival; they keep you going, and with great success at that; but they can never *change* your life. Life is *changed* only by Knowledge.

INFORMATION and SKILLS are acquired from outside i.e. the World; Knowledge is received from inside i.e. the Self [Those who are eager to find out how are urged to read Plato's Dialogues in which his teacher and mentor Socrates demonstrates publicly the veracity of his axiom]. The former are the products of academic instruction and/ or practical training, but the latter is granted by God's grace. The former are incremental; acquisition the latter is instant illumination. INFORMATION and SKILLS make you uncontrollably restless; KNOWLEDGE endows you with an imperturbable acquiescence!

In the mundane world, Knowledge is akin to notions of Reality, essentially material or objective, based on speculations or, at best, ratiocinative cerebration, such as one comes across in philosophic treatises or theories of nature, life, or social sciences. During workaday existence, however, as a general rule, all of us tend to hone our skills primarily in the fields of commerce, social transactions, and statecraft. Driven by the baser instincts, we seek success in these areas *anyhow*. Thus, the lust for acquisition of wealth becomes a serious, if dishonest, pursuit. Or, to secure political advantage, we use all kinds of machinations and manoeuvres—and, if the situation so warrants, do not hesitate to even resort to kidnapping, rape, riots, and murder. Indulgence in intrigues for one-up-man-ship comes *naturally* to us for self-assertion in social and political circles.

Dwelling on the term 'Knowledge', as it is loosely used in general and specialised discourses throughout the world, it must be said that Knowledge [Gyan], both in its mundane and divine forms, is the fruit of focused Consciousness [Dhyan], the seed. Yet the two forms are poles apart. In the case of mundane situations, Dhyan gets quickly scattered soon after Gyan has been acquired; say, one of learning how to drive a car. Mind is keenly focused because of the impending risk [one of accident, which may be fatal] involved-the Mind is all the time with the Body, guiding it, coordinating its many complex and varied movements, coaching its reflexes to gauge and anticipate changes necessary to cope up with emergencies, and so forth. Mind's Red-Alert kind of Vigil produces and backs up an acute keenness of focus on the problem on hand-it is in a state of perfect MEDITATION. The reason for this mercurial scattering of focused Consciousness in worldly pursuits is that the Knowledge so acquired is extremely limited. But if the same Vigil and Keenness be exercised in the case of contemplating the Divinity of God, the seeker sets foot on the soil of Dharma, the Cosmic Moral Law, and Dhyan puts him in touch with Gyan of a divine kind, and there is an incremental keenness of focus, for the more one succeeds in conjoining Surta [Consciousness] with Shabda [Word] the more one is in touch with Ananda [Bliss]-and Ananda has intrinsic power of attraction and allurement so enormous that the seeker of Truth who has once tasted it never abandons his pursuit under any circumstances, at any cost.

HUMILITY is a psycho-emotional scale that measures the nature and magnitude of Soul vis-à-vis the Divinity of God. The more the Consciousness shifts its focus from off the Body the deeper the sense of inner insufficiency grows—until the Ego begins to see itself as a mere drop in the shoreless Ocean of Godhood. Progress along these lines means an ever-advancing movement from the Body, which is a world of countless sorrows, griefs, pains, ailments, inadequacies, and all that is unpleasant, towards God who is an inexhaustible Treasure of *Sat, Chit*, and *Ananda* or Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss. It will be wrong to assume that all these negative attributes of moral life cease to exist. They are very much there—being atomic in nature and subtle in substance they are indestructible. Only Consciousness refuses to take note of them, much less nurse them to the chagrin of Man!

GOD is Light, the Home of All Creation and Creatures. GURU [the Spiritual Preceptor] is Shabda [the Sacred Word], the Door to the Divine Home. God is Power, not Person-Power that is created from His Own Being, and not the result of some extraneous product and/or process. Person is a product of Time, which makes and mars everything that we see in the manifest world of objects. Time activates Space, even creates its own Space whenever, wherever, necessary. Time needs Space for enacting the Drama of Creation. Time without Space cannot create. Space without Time is inert vacuity. However, these parameters do not apply to God who Himself is the Creator of these two fundamental Elements of All Creation constituting Time-Space Continuum-a universal concept beyond which even the most brilliant and accomplished Scientist finds it impossible to imagine. But, surprisingly, that is his barren reason to declare that God does not exist little knowing and realising that His divine home is everywhere yet beyond Time and Space-nowhere!

TIME's customary three segments: Past, Present, and Future are akin to Thought, Action, and Product or the fruit of deed(s). The word 'Omnipresent', used with respect to God, connotes Time-Space Continuum. In other words, the expression 'Present Everywhere' [an attribute of Space] implies 'Simultaneity' [an attribute of Time]. These two extreme conditions are, by their very nature, such that God alone fulfils them [as Power, not Person]. One Person can be present only at one place, at one time. Since all Bodies are created by Time they are

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perishable by a natural act of Time, and cannot, therefore, be *Guru* [the Spiritual Preceptor]. *Shabda* or the Sacred Word is the weightless embodiment of God's Divine Light. It is Sound [utterance or *Dhun*] turned into written sign [word or *Shabda*] for universal communication. Even the dictionary meaning of word is: a unit of spoken language; a written sign representing such an utterance.

Distance is of two kinds: Distance in Time; and Distance in Space. The smallest unit of Time is a single breath or a second. The largest unit of Time is a full year. The smallest unit of Space is a millimetre, and the largest is a metre. Conventionally, a foot was the basic unit of length, originally derived from the length of the human foot that is divided into 12 inches and equal to 30.48 centimetres. The two work in tandem with each other. One without the other cannot exist. A perfect proof is that astronomical distances are measured in light-years! A light-year is the distance traversed by light in one mean solar year, about 5.88 trillion miles [9.46 trillion kilometres]: used as a unit in measuring stellar distances. The expression "light-years" has come to mean "a very great distance", especially in development or progress. Today's computers are light-years ahead of older ones. Everyone seems to acknowledge, albeit unconsciously, the crucial fact of Time-Space Continuum [or, Time as the Fourth Dimension of Space, as Albert Einstein succinctly put it] when we use "light-year" as a [Time] unit of measure of stellar Space!

MEDITATION is psychic endeavour to collect scattered Consciousness in the Act of conjoining Thought, Word, and Deed, in which Innocence brings about an Experience that apprehends Truth as *self-evident* God's Primal Reality. Such INNOCENCE is a state of Mind, appropriately called SPIRITUALITY [that has weightless existence though it can and does have awesome impact], from which the many-layered patina of inhibitions, reinforced by centuries of inherited intrigues, has been cast off, *unawares*, for the sake of vulnerability to the sum total of Life's primordial existential impulses without anyone's fear or favour.

WANT A PROOF FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?

Whether you believe in God or not is of no consequence (as it does not affect Him in any way) because Nobody, just nobody, in the entire world (and there are absolutely no exceptions to this axiom of mine) ever, by conscious effort, does anything at all which would go against his self-interest—but yet, more often than not, many things go wrong and decisively harm his material and moral well being.

Since, by its axiomatic verity, this Rule (which is a corollary to the human instinct for survival called "libido" by Sigmund Freud, the Father of Modern Psychology), applies to each of the seven-plus billion peoples who now inhabit the globe, who is it by whose edictfiat negativity prevails worldwide?

You may call it by any name but, for me, the familiar names, among countless epithets, are: God, Rama, Om, Waheguru, Allah-hoo ... In religious parlance, these are called *Mantras* or Master Words. To my thinking, all *mantras* are words *sanctified* by those who have had the rare privilege of receiving them in a state of palpable Communion with God.

Man is the crowning glory of all creation. This averment is selfrecommendatory, for it is Man saying so in his own favour.

So how do we resolve this conundrum?

Consider this Proposition: Man is the only creature who can capture alive even the wildest among animals—animals which are many times more powerful than he is in physical strength.

Then, how does he do it?

He does it by two means: (1) Superior Brain (Thought), and (2) Dexterous Hands (Deed), which are from quadruped locomotion highly-evolved instruments of Action.

Science has established that dolphins have a brain superior to human grey matter. And their sexuality is akin to humans in that it is not seasonal, like in the case of other animals. Dolphins quickly learn to mimic human voice and actions. But, then, why are dolphins still in the sea whereas Man dwelling on land has made incredible advancement in an amazing range of fields?

My Answer: Dolphins have no hands, although their bodies are brilliantly adapted to their fluid Environment. From this it follows that human progress is not entirely the result of Superior Brain. Man couldn't have done and achieved much without his two Dexterous Hands.

Although there is a plethora of literature on Evolution which shows that Man has assumed his present human stature through endless gruelling in lower forms of life yet nearly all of it requiring laboratorytest proof is beyond the reach of all but the few Scientists working in the area of Evolution.

So what do we do to summon convincing evidence at our doorstep?

Contemplate this one Observation: All quadrupeds are diagonal walkers/runners i.e. their right leg moves forward with the left hind leg while the other 'diagonal' pair moves backward. The result is that, at any given point of time in locomotion, if the left foreleg-hindleg pair converges, the right foreleg-hindleg pair diverges.

In this curious sense, Man is a quadruped with an erect posture that enables his forelegs (evolutionally transformed into his arms and hands) to be *free* from locomotion to engage in creative activities. Now, when Man moves, observe: His right arm in tandem with his left leg moves forward just as the other pair does so in the reverse direction. Isn't this proof enough that *Man has evolved from the lower forms of life with his recent ancestors being quadrupeds?*

Another Unique Thing: Locomotion is the result of two opposed movements—forward and backward—perfectly coordinated with the ground under feet being stationary. The same applies to the movement of arm: Bending it at the elbow means that the upper muscles are contracted while the lower ones relax.

Movement as a result of the perfectly-coordinated interplay of opposite forces can be observed everywhere, all the time, endlessly: Day and Night!

Now, if you have a strong *Scientific Temper* to stubbornly believe that Science is the ultimate Saviour of Humankind, and Religion is a decadent, though undying body of myths and superstitions, make Evolution your New Faith to repose trust unquestioningly in the

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dictum that the Universe is made of two colours—and their very opposition makes life a self-renewing existential adventure. Needless to say that in your fresh credo you will not expect only one colour to persist—and the intellectual incisiveness that you receive from such conviction you will *never* believe the glib-talking TV *Gurus* and those who endlessly write self-improvement books to fool you into believing that you can always have happiness, with grief totally obliterated from your life.

Unless you have acquired that kind of unflinching attitude and unswerving faith [in yourself] you will never step into the Realm of Reason where Civilisation (as opposed to Culture) dwells—and makes humans a species stand far above all those inhabiting the Animals Kingdom to lead instincts-borne lives!

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CHANDIGARH, 03 January 2020

-Dr SS Bhatti



If you want to learn how to tell genuine from fake in what is these days selling like hot cakes globally –YOGA and all that related humbug—I urge you to spare your valuable time to read the material in this Section slowly and steadily, but seriously.

Preface

The Sun, the Stars, the Planets, the Cosmos, the Plants, the Animals nothing has changed or changes *except* Man's thinking. The Five Elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space of which everything that exists is composed—do not change/have never changed/will never change, and have the same attributes as they had at the time of their Genesis. Water flows; Air blows; Fire burns; Earth is solid; and Space is the eternal container. The Sun is the Life-Giver and Life-Sustainer. It is also the Measure of Time, which was born with it. The smallest unit of (practical) chronometry is the second; and the largest, the year. Days, Nights, Weeks, Months—all fall in-between.

Connotations of Truth

In the context delineated above, it should be relatively easy to grasp why GOD'S chief attribute is TRUTH. Truth, in terms of workaday existence, has many connotations. It means that which is not subject to change; and, by implication, that which is beyond the regimen of Time and Space. In essence, it is Infinite-Eternal: ideal or fundamental Reality apart from, and transcending, perceived experience. It *actually* exists as it existed before the Universe was created, and shall continue to exist after the dissolution of the Universe, and is *not* a figment of anybody's imagination such as various mythologies claim. Applied to human behaviour, Truth is Character: the moral aspect of Personality in terms of honesty and integrity. It extends to Philanthropy as altruistic concern for human beings, especially as manifested by donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or to institutions advancing human welfare. It also has the connotation *"to tell the truth"*.

Word-Chant

Jap-Tap may now be seen in a different light. Jap is sustained attentive chant of a mantra or Master-Word. Tap is heat as an attribute of fire. When Jap is practised with stubborn persistence the Fire within the body is lighted, so much so that it can be palpably felt on the practitioner's forehead as Tap or heat. This subtle fire (or Agni) has been called by sanctified names: Patanjali [The Father of Yoga] named it Yoga-Agni; Saint Kabir called it Brahm-Agni; and Guru Nanak gave it the epithet: Naam-Agni. Just as fever is built by the Body by its own in-built mechanism to burn up foreign bodies causing affliction, Tap is produced by the practitioner's endless Jap. The whole exercise is called Dhyan Sadhna. Dhyan is unremitting aim-pointed Attention, and Sadhna is a psychic workout for the health of the Mind. Dhyan is a focused endeavour at conjoining the Surt (Soul-Consciousness) with Shabda (the sanctified Word). Surt is a function of the human Mind, which is likened to the seed to be sown in the Soil called Shabda.

Raising the Consciousness

Speech is produced when the desire to speak occurring in the Mind strikes the navel (*Dhavni*: literally, sound), and a column of sound-vibrations rises upward from the abdomen, passing the regions of heart, throat, and the tongue—where, respectively, words, sentences, and

speech are progressively formed. In *Dhyan Sadhna*, the entire process must be reversed. The tongue utters the *Shabda* [Om, Rama, Wah-e-Guru, Allah-hoo, Jesus, or any other sanctified Word given by Mystics of various world religions], which the Mind (as Soul-Consciousness) listens through the ear with rapt attention (*Dhyan*) and, with sustained effort, is taken down (and back) to the navel (the Source) via the throat and heart regions without losing focus. Simple though it may seem this exercise is actually an uphill task, *literally*. The reason: the human consciousness has the temperament of Water—it flows *naturally* downwards: to the stomach, the genitals, etc. And the *Dhyan Sadhna* is aimed at pumping the "water", as it were, upwards to the topmost storey: the brain.

Kundalini

This may sound paradoxical to an uninitiated practitioner, but it is really not so. Soul-Consciousness, originating in the Brain, which is, to all intents and purposes, the Seat of the Mind, flows out and downwards through the seven doors located in the human head: two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, and one mouth. The other two doors are located in the anus and the phallus (*lingam*)/vagina (*yoni*). At the navel, the site of the severed umbilical cord is coiled up the *Kundalini*, which is an important ganglion in the body according to yoga. When the practitioner succeeds in striking the Word at this point the uncoiled *Kundalini* releases enormous quanta of energy in the form of *Naam-Agni*. It is this subtle heat, the cold splendour of Truth, that instantly burns the dross of countless sins Man had accumulated during previous births—to make way for the *Surt-Shabda* to enter the Tenth secret Door for a glimpse of God called *Param-Atma* or Supreme Light.

Crime or Sin

Mind's evil thinking is Sin. Body's misdeeds are Crimes. Although the Centres of Evil Thought are only three: Life, Wealth, and Prestige/ Reputation, their forms are myriad. The first one i.e. Life produces Murderers; the second one i.e. Wealth gives birth to dacoits; the third one i.e. Reputation has rapists as its offspring. Criminals, the so-called bad characters, who are identified by Law and punished as such, are not too many as compared with the number of Sinners, who are inaccessible to Law, to Society, and other systems contrived by Humankind. Criminals may be one in 10,000, but Sinners are far too many to leave a few who, by God's grace, are truly virtuous. Whether you believe in God or not hardly matters to Him, for He has dispensed his grace to everyone without exception. God has concealed everyone's myriad sins. The reason: Law and Society can and do see Crimes, but God alone can and does see sins. The sins of previous lives are carried forward to make an astronomical number that can never be tackled by any man enthusiastically involved with the ways of the world. Attention centred in the Ego makes the consciousness flow downward into the cesspool of life. To reverse the flow to take it upwards [to Godhood] requires tremendous pressure. Sins cannot be eradicated by any means whatever except their disposal by burning by Naam-Agni, which can be lighted only by Dhyan Sadhna.

Role of Religion

Spiritual food for the Soul can be provided only by Religion through its ethical and aesthetic condiments and recipes, but the need for it must be as intense as it is in the case of physical hunger. Strangely, though the Soul and the Body are miles apart, the same logic works in both the cases. Unless you are really hungry you won't eat it. The contrast between the two is extremely hard to grasp and overcome. At the physical plane, it is very difficult to earn your livelihood and then to cook your own food, but relatively much easier to eat it. At the spiritual level, it is very easy to prepare the food, and well nigh impossible to eat it. In the former case, the food is cooked with hands and eaten through the mouth. In the latter case, it is prepared by *Jap* i.e. constant chanting of the *Mantra* by the tongue, but eaten via the ear!

Spiritual Hunger

You don't have to be a philosopher to appreciate this crucial fact that you won't want to eat such a food that warrants an exceptional effort of will to prepare and to eat—unless, of course, you are awfully hungry. The point to note is that the pangs of hunger in themselves are strong enough, in the case of physical hunger, to compel you to eat without the ceremonious need of rites and rituals, which are part of the Offertory Service in the Christian Religion, to invoke the sacred efficacy of the Communion Service. Such ceremonies, rites, and rituals have been prescribed in all religions as appetisers for Spiritual Hunger. And yet a hard-to-notice number of human beings very rarely succeed in getting their Souls feel the pangs of hunger for God-remembrance.

What is R-E-L-I-G-I-O-N?

To my understanding, this word is an acronym anonymously developed, which, when de-ARCONYM-ised, means: **R**igorous **E**mpathy created by **L**ove to **I**nspire in the **G**uts **I**nward **O**dyssey for realizing **N**oumena. Love is the sublimest emotion in the human heart, and is the most crucial single factor in the validation of *Dhyan Sadhna*. In other words, without the active spring-wells of Love all forms of religious practices are of no avail. Guru Nanak has stressed this point as a prerequisite of stepping into the realm of Religion.

Love is a game of Martyr-in-the-waiting He must bring his severed head for dating He who passes this most gruelling test Gets from God the highest rating

In another hymn he has called Love the Timeless-Universal Language of the True Lord whose Justice is like Himself True.

Needs Distinguished

Now, it should be in order to distinguish between the needs of the Body vis-à-vis those of the Mind. Body, as manifest physical entity, is made up of Matter that lies outside the realm of the Mind. In other words, Body,

as an outer reality, is sustained by all that is available outside in the world of people, places, objects, and things. Mind is infinitely subtle—and is a spark of Divine Light. Its food is God, not Goods.

What is Ignorance?

It is Mind's misperception that its needs can be satisfied from the outside world exactly as is the case with the Body's. Thus misled, it goes astray, for, when material acquisitions fail to satisfy it, the Mind, rather than retrace its footsteps, tends to augment needs into wants, and thence into Greed—, which is a self-defeating exercise. All psychiatric problems are the progeny of this sordid disillusionment that deepens evermore into incurable depression by plunging into graver and graver Ignorance.

Centres of Thinking

Thus, the three Centres of Evil Thinking: Lust, Greed, and Vanity never die though the Body perishes *naturally* with age; naturally, because it was designed to obey the Laws of Nature as its "Maker". Nature has no autonomy as scientists erroneously tend to believe. It is God's own manifest might. The Persian word "*Qudrat*" for "Nature" has precisely this meaning. It is also pertinent to point out that Nature has fixed the pace at which Living Matter must take shape, grow, flower, bear fruit, go to seed, decay, and die.

Slow and steady wins the race.

Such a concept is embodied in the proverb: *Slow and steady wins the race.* This pace is universal-timeless at the macro-scale, but unique at the micro-level. This means that every individual human person goes through the cycle of life at their own pre-programmed pace. But the irony is that Man through the development of drugs and technology has acquired the power to alter this pace to what he erroneously believes to be the *normal* rate. It is erroneous, because that *normal* rate is, in point of fact, an average of averages. Although Man continues to make this error with audacity he never admits it due to his bloated Ego. This is

where he unwittingly departs from the tenets of Religion to make a deal with an unending cycle of births and deaths and rebirths.

Live-Salvation

Lust, Greed, and Vanity accompany the Soul beyond the grave or the cremation ground to inhabit another "body"—which is God's way of giving him another chance to make success of mortal life by turning it inwards where food for Mind awaits him. In other words, unless Man, in this very life before the mortal body perishes, manages to earn God's grace through *Dhyan Sadhna*, his Mind won't "die" to merge with Divine Light as its own spark—and he will continue to be whirled about through life and death, endlessly. In this special sense, it is crucial to grasp the plain truth that Salvation is not an after-life endowment. It is either here-and-now or never there at all. Attaining to such a state of Mind one becomes the blessed beneficiary of a *live-salvation*; the saving of Man from the power and penalty of Sin, and the conferring of eternal happiness on him!

Spiritual Progress

Ego feeds on virtues. The higher the learning the graver is the Ego. So is the case with wealth. It is impossible not to be egotist when one has lots of wealth. Even the so-called religious people and spiritual gurus are not free from this psycho-pathological condition. They are vain about being religious or spiritual or take pride in leading a disciplined life of principles. They are the *dharmic*-Egotists. They may not say by word of mouth but their minds keep chattering about this virtue. Thus, virtues and vices are equated in true Religious Life as being veritable obstacles in the way of Spiritual Progress.

Truth-Consciousness-Bliss

Saint Kabir does not recognise "renunciation" as of any consequence. He stresses the discomfiting truth that it may be easier to renounce wealth than to renounce the haunting notion of renunciation itself! This is a besetting Sin in both his case and that of the householder which is hopelessly caught in the tangled mesh of worries of life's wherewithal and tensions of the future. In this sense, Egotism is synonymous with Mind. Egotism dies to give birth to Godhood: imperturbable state of Truth-Consciousness-Bliss. The Body dies to give birth again to mortal life: an unending cycle of worries, tensions, anxieties, and all that besets the mortal frame.

Goals of Life

Human Life has only two goals: Ego, and Godhood. Egotism forces Consciousness to move outwards. Godhood guides the Soul to look within. Ego unremittingly seeks satisfaction through the acquisition of Power, Wealth, and Beauty/Youth. The inward Journey moves towards the realisation of Divinity lodged within the mortal frame. It has only one solitary means to achieve it: *Dhyan Sadhna that could bring about an inseparable commingling of Surt with Shabda*. Power, wealth, and Beauty/Youth turn Man into a madcap, so much so that he misuses/ abuses the Virtues, which are a vehicle for reaching out to God, for Ego-travels of the mortal world. The Egotist, with Power or Wealth, gets angry with those who are an obstacle in his way of feeding his vainglory; and becomes attached to those who help him, albeit on the sly, to do so smoothly. This anger turns into violence if the Egotist wields enormous power as others cannot easily withstand or challenge.

Poetry is Revelation

The *Rishis* [literally, Poets] of yore revealed these truths in their meditations [*Dhyan Sadhna*] and expressed them through timeless verses. These verses are *not* poems of the kind which we read in books of literature because such are written according to literary standards of versification. But in the case of the *Rishis*, Poetry is the Language of Prophecy. All prophets are invariably poets, but all poets are not necessarily prophets. Poets of the secular variety are literary people groping in the Dark. At best, their poetry is like the sparkle of a glowworm. In the case of Rishis, however, Poetry is Revelation like the

stabbing flash of Lightning. Their Poetry is the eruption of divine Light from within. Such rare Poets give birth to The Bible or The Gita in which Song and music are integral to joyous seeing of Divine Light.

Culture of Dharma

The *Rishi's* Poetry and personality are one organic whole. A *Rishi* is a *Rishi*, perennially so, whereas a secular poet is a *Rishi* once in a blue moon! Prophets own the world's vices so that Virtues may come into their full intrinsic glow. The intent, content, and expression of their Poetry are all steeped in the Culture of *Dharma* [Ethics]: The Cosmic Moral Law, and the Civilisation of the Soul that has subsumed all discrimination of caste, creed, colour, ethnicity, and whatever else Man has created to split his Consciousness into vagabond atoms of insatiable desires and longings. The best index of man's Ignorance is his stubborn belief that he can extinguish the fires of Lust, Greed, and Ego by feeding them with more and more fuel!

Ego is Body-Consciousness

It should be clear from the frequent use of the word "ego" in the foregoing exposition that Ego is Body-Consciousness i.e. the Egotist relates and reckons everything in terms of the physicality of his Body; his name, his parents, his family, his home, his workplace, his...everything. This is a gross fallacy, with a weed-like fertility: it grows on its own, proliferates... until it gets out of control, totally. It thus prepares a congenial ground of sophistry to convince the Mind that the Body's needs are its very own wants and cravings. Mind in the inebriate fantasy of Egotism [*Aham-kaar*; literally, "I"-making] strays into the Wasteland of Wants and Cravings, forever nursing the wounds of "Me-'n'-Mine" with the regrets of the Past, fancies of the Present, and anxieties of the Future.

The Oneness of All things

God has made everything as ONE, using the same Five Elements: Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Space—diversifying them into a staggering variety by incorporating the Three Qualities: *Tamas* [Inertia

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and Ignorance], *Rajas* [Ardency and Ambition], and *Sattva* [Poise and Patience]. Man has divided everything into countries, creeds, castes, classes, races, communities, laws—including God: Christian God, Hindu God, Muslim God, and so on—except SUN because it is out of reach to split and far too hot to grab! This is the invidious miracle wrought by Man's genius perverted by Egotism. The God-oriented Consciousness says: Everything is THINE, O God!

"Egotist" is "Ego-Sick"

Looking at Life in this lurid light, it should be easy to appreciate why Art becomes suicidal when connected with Egotism. For, stricken by such a malignant affliction, Man, endowed by God with creative powers, misuses God's natural gifts, such as iron, to make swords, weapons, cages, and much else to destroy in the mistaken belief that by doing so he can establish one-upmanship over his imagined enemies. Thus, in the Journey of Mortal Life, EGO is the supreme Goal, and it misleads Man into the most horrendous of misdeeds. Ego travels on Virtues and the Arts. However, Art, which is supposed to conjoin Consciousness with the Cosmos, is used by the Egotist to divide, rule, and destroy. This brings out the real connotation of the word "Egotist" as "Ego-Sick". The Mind regains its true health when it begins its Journey towards Godhood in the unbroken chant: I'm nothing; I'm *nothing*...!

World's Journey

Journey of "Me-'n'-Mine" moves in and around the World, and confines the Passenger-Soul to it birth after birth, endlessly. Only Journey of "Thee-'n'-Thine" has God for its ultimate destination. "Mine" principally covers Power, Property, Family, Business, and everything related to one or more of these material acquisitions. The larger the "Mine" the bigger the "Me". In the course of time "Mine" possesses the Mind so strongly and completely that even an adversary is referred to as MY Enemy, and all thoughts of and feelings about him are nursed and nurtured as would raise one's own progeny. World's Journey consists of 'Me'-'n'-Mine It eventually leads to the Destination called 'I' Follow You the Path of 'Thee'-n'-'Thine' If you must reach God, The Most High

The Ailing "I"

All Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, ironically, are focused on elevating and reinforcing the ailing "I"! The Man so stricken counts even his prayers or routine scriptural recitations much like a grocer counts his currency. In such a case, all forms of meditation and religious formula become business. In sharp contradistinction, God-remembrance exalts even mundane business to the level of Meditation, like it did in the case of Guru Nanak who lost count of wheat-weighs at Modi Khana of the Lodhi Ruler when he reached the numeral "Tera" [which is also the number "13"] thinking of it as "Thine" that is what it means in the vernacular. The contrast between the two must be noted: in one case. the Meditation is turned into an exercise in counting while, in the other, Counting is transmuted into Meditation. Thus, Dhyan Sadhna transcends the terrestrial barriers of Language, Country, Race, Colour, Creed, Caste, Class, and all other manmade divisions of God's most marvellous creation: Mother Earth. In other words, Man cannot get out of God's Omnipresence, but he can certainly deny His Existence through the efficacious means of psycho-spiritual amnesia. Mind mayn't acknowledge God as GOD, but he doesn't have to believe in Satan to be Satanic. The very denial of God is in itself Satanic!

Human Bondage

That alone, which the Mind accepts as real and profitable, gets retained in human memory, and is automatically remembered. Relations are the most convincing example. The relationships between parents and children; husband and wife; siblings; and so forth are accepted without a question or second thoughts, even though, ironically, they lead to unbreakable Human Bondage. This being so, to remember your son, when he is away, you don't need any reminders or rituals or ceremonies. You just *remember* him! All genres of rituals, rites, ceremonies, philosophies, sermons, the dos and don'ts are warranted only in the case of God who Man doesn't accept as God. And yet He is rarely remembered with any seriousness or the same intensity of feeling as one does in remembering one's relations.

Meditation become Market

That someone goes to church regularly does not necessarily mean that he accepts God as God. He goes there as if the church were a Spiritual Mall in his Religion's Downtown where he could get anything that he desires. Other peoples of the world going to their own Places of Worship—*Mandir* [temple], *Masjid* [mosque], Synagogue, *Gurdwara* [Sikh temple]—belong to the same category as the church-goer if they have not already accepted God as God. They go there to strike a deal that would be profitable to them in the long run. It is these people who have turned Places of Worship into Markets.

God's Benefaction

It is in this special, if perverted, sense that they all are ONE, universally, timelessly! In other words, they have no truck with the Benefactor, but they do have dealings with Him for His Benefaction. To the extent they do so, and keep doing so, they are hopelessly ignorant of the plain truth that God gives without asking. Only He gives according to the size of the Man's receptivity i.e. the size of his heart. God doesn't dispense readymade garments. He stitches them to suit everyone's unique individual size.

Examples Galore

There are examples galore that exemplify God's magnanimity: the area of the Earth is much more than is all the living creatures together require; so also drinking water, oxygen, and numerous other Life-Giving/Life-Sustaining Gifts of Nature. It is another matter that Man doesn't seem to count them among His myriad blessings. God's grace is raining all the time, but if you don't catch the rainwater it is because you haven't held out your receptacle yet to receive it, or it is too small to contain what you could easily notice, or you have kept it upside down! In this respect, God as The Father of Humankind knows what each of His children needs, just as the human father knows the needs of his children and fulfils them without their asking.

Craving and Hope

Man is a beggar of a hopeless type. He asks God for everything *except* Him! (They go there to know about God and not God HIMSELF) He alone would ask for God Himself in his prayers who accepts God as God above all human relations and material requirements. Just the same some people are a deeply contented lot. Contentment is being satisfied with whatever one has because both Craving and Hope have been subsumed in Ego's surrender to the Will of God. Such a state of Mind then becomes an apt, consecrated receptacle of Divine Grace, spilling over with incremental ecstasy.

Power of God's Name

Dhyan Sadhna produces an aura which is seen around a Saint's head as a halo. It affects everything up to 50 miles. It reaches out to others like torchlight. The halo is round like other things God has made round. Its vibrations are like a waft of fresh breeze. The aura scents the inner life with its spiritual fragrance. A saint's utterance of the Holy Name once is enough to cure any disease. But such a state of Consciousness is reached after lifelong practice, or even many lives of practice, because it requires God's grace to be blessed with supernatural powers. Saint Kabir once rebuked his wife Loi why she had to utter Ram-Naam three times to cure a patient when saying it once was enough. She said that she succeeded in her mission by a single utterance, the other two were wasted because neither her mind nor the patient's was listening with undivided attention.

DHYAN SADHNA

Sound-Current

According to *Gurbani*, the Sacred Scripture of the Sikh Faith, not only Salvation but such supernatural powers can be had by the devotee here and now even if he remembers God for a fraction of a second. The only condition is that he must have full, unshakable faith in Divine dispensation—and his Mind must be precisely tuned in to the *dhun*, the Sound-Current created by the utterance of God's Holy Name, and listen to it as if he were deaf to every other sound of the world! That's why it is repeatedly stressed that as *Dhyan Sadhna*, which is immeasurably deep listening, by virtue of which, the practitioner's thinking is enormously elevated. The simple formula is: The deeper the Listening the Higher the Thought and Speech. This is true in Nature too. A tree whose crown reaches up to Heavens has, indeed, very deep roots. Engineering also corroborates this plain truth. The higher a building is the deeper are its foundations.

Service

Sewa or Service is indispensable in supporting, promoting, and sustaining Dhyan Sadhna. In fact, Guru Nanak has laid stress on socially beneficent action as the foundation of God-remembrance. His threeprong formula is: Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow [Kirat Karo]; Then share your earnings with the less-privileged ones [vand Chhako]; and Chant God's Holy Name [Naam Japo]. Only when the three are practised together religiously that Sewa [Service] can become a habit of the Mind rather than remain a mere kill-joy activity. In other words, Sewa truly comes into its own when Doing is Not-Doing!

Self-Abnegation

It was precisely such a self-abnegating service [*Sewa*]; in this case, the redemption of Humankind, that made Jesus Christ an adorable Personification of Compassion—a palpable Attribute of the Almighty Father. Impelled by this sublime emotion, he uttered from the Cross those words of highest charity and perfection, asking forgiveness for

those who were to put him to death: "Father, Forgive them, for they know not what they do!" In a similar vein, Guru Arjan Dev, the Fifth Master of the Sikh Faith, expressed his gratitude to Lord God: "Sweet tastes Thy Will and I beg for the priceless gift of Thy Holy Name!" when he was being tortured to death by the Muslim executioners at the behest of Mughal Emperor Jahangir.

> Man incurably afflicted with Divine Madness Always looks at Life's events 'n' accidents thus He reckons whatever's happened to be ordain'd And in doing so recognises his God's command

Cleverness clings to Craving; Simplicity befriends Longing for Truth, which is the chief attribute of God. The Householder is led astray by Craving; the Ascetic by the pride of renunciation, because, in each case, God is lost to psycho-spiritual amnesia.

God is both near and far.

This is a self-contradictory statement. But yet some saints feel that God is nearer than one's hand whereas others say that He is farther than anything in the cosmos. Both are right in their own right because God alone fits the bill. All pairs of opposites get resolved in Him at His will. But what is the meaning of "near" and "far"? Nearness and Farness are measured in Space as well as Time. Although modern Physics has melded the two into Time-Space Continuum, with Nobel Laureate Albert Einstein proclaiming that Time is the Fourth Dimension of Space. Space was believed to have only three dimensions: length, breadth/width, and height/depth, and Newtonian Physics is based on that notion, and, therefore, staticism inherent in that concept made everything "absolute". But modern physics renders that view obsolete, if in certain respects, and introduces the idea of dynamism whereby the "absolute" gets transformed into the "relative". Though these perceptions are valuable in Man's understanding of the Objective World, their limitations are not so obvious. It's *Dhyan Sadhna* that reveals the Truth, which remains hidden from Science, its sophisticated instrumentations, observations, and experimentations notwithstanding.

Male and Female Principles

Space has points, which may be billions of miles away from one another while Time may extend billions of years away in the Past and in the Future. Besides the concepts of "nearness" and "farness" two other notions could be applied to Space and Time. Space is the Female Principle. Time is the Male Principle. According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, Time creates its own Space. But Space is more fundamental, for without Space nothing can exist. Even the densest matter has got inter-atomic Space. The unremitting dynamism of Life lies in that all events take place *in* Space *through* Time.

Power of Time

Time destroys what it creates by its own Law, the operation of which is observable in Nature. Time is Linear as well as Cyclical. Time's Linearity and Cyclicity are resolvable into a Helix which, in my view, is the best geometric expression of the notion of Time-Space Continuum., for the Helix cannot be conceived without Space being there in the first place! Moving on a helix would be like moving around and up a hill so that at any point of Time or Space it is possible to see how far you have come from the bottom and how far off you still are from the peak. The human Mind seems to remember the Past and to visualise the Future according to the imperatives of this curious process.

God's Oneness

All these concepts, notions, theories, and perceptions, however, are not applicable to God, for He dwells beyond the ken of Time and Space as well as in Time and Space, as Primal Person. Nature and Cosmos, as already pointed out, are God's attributive forms, with Nature being His manifest Might. He is there in everything from the grain of sand to the Sun, and from the ant to the elephant. And His ONENESS retains its Integrity and Unity everywhere, at all times, without exception. The manifest cosmos is God's embodied-Self. But all bodies, without exception, must obey the inalienable Law of Time, regardless of the fact that they belong to Prophets, Saints, Seers, and *Avataras* [believed to be incarnations of God Himself]. Born in Time they must all die sooner or later! Herein lies the secret that *Shabda* [which carries the *dhun* or sound-current] dies not and is, therefore, the True *Guru* or eternally-dependable Spiritual Preceptor!

God is not a Person

In the light of the foregoing exposition, God is a Power, not a Person in the restricted terrestrial sense; as He is not like the Power of Wind or Water or Fire, which are His creations as attributive manifestations. He is a Power created from within Him. He is, therefore, supernal rather than natural. The use of the word "person" in the phrase "Primal Person" has a special connotation in that God is *not* an Abstract Principle of Truth. He is alive and kicking. Only He is not born nor does He ever die, for He is beyond the ken of Space and Time, which are His own creations. He has no Form, yet all forms come from Him. He has no colour, yet all colours come from Him. He is Timeless, yet all Time comes from Him. He dwells outside Space, yet Space comes from Him. A person, as an embodied soul, can be at one place only at one time. But God as a Power has Omnipresence; Omnipotence; Omniscience; and illimitable other attributes Man cannot even imagine.

God's Unattributed Nothingness

Since in His Unattributed Existence God has none of the stated attributes, as Man commonly encounters in his daily life, He has thus, unlike Man, no parentage, no religion, no creed, no nationality, no race... Form sprung from the Formless is reabsorbed into Formlessness. A decaying flower slowly loses its colour, its fragrance, its structure, its form, its beauty...to God's Unattributed Nothingness.

DHYAN SADHNA

Socrates' Realisation

A story is told of the indubitable Socrates who, on meeting a young boy carrying fire in a bowl, queries: "Where did this fire come from?" The boy, unable to grasp the question, blew out the flame, and quizzically queried back the old philosopher: "Sire, can you tell me where the fire has gone?" Receiving instant illumination from an innocent heart, the world's greatest thinker patted the boy, for he saw in a fitful flash of realisation that all forms come the Formless One!

Who is Guru?

At this juncture, it is ripe to point out: Who is God; Who is *Guru*? God is Light. *Guru* is *Shabda* or the Holy Word. God is Home. *Guru* is the Door. Hence the word "*Guru-Dwara*" [the vernacular word for a Sikh temple], which means The Spiritual Preceptor is the Door to the Home called God! Of course, all these are metaphors drawn from objects and structures one is familiar with through everyday encounters with life lived in a known environment. Their limitations should be obvious because the "familiar" can never be a sure aid to accessing what is essentially "unfamiliar". In the case of God the difficulty becomes impossible to overcome owing to His Formlessness.

Samaadhi

The real and complete experience of God's Being can never be had because when Consciousness reaches its psycho-spiritual orgasm it loses its individuated identity in mystic absorption with His Quintessence, a state of Communion called *Samaadhi*. At any rate, it is some help, at least in achieving correct orientation of Consciousness God-wards. Thus, the metaphor of Door for the *Guru* comes handy to underscore the plain truth that a door is meant to enter the home, and not for sitting at the doorstep. The role of the Spiritual Preceptor is over at that point, and devotee must move inside from there, for the Soul, as a spark of the Divine Light, must merge with its original-genetic, infinite effulgence.

The Holy Word

Seen in another way it would mean, to use another metaphor, that the Sun, Rays, and Light are inseparable even though they are apparently different to the uninitiated eye. What one actually sees is what the three together have revealed for a while. This is the World of Phenomena. The World of Noumena is revealed by Divine Light, it's the ear that *sees* the *light* unfold from the *dhun*, the sound-current, of *Shabda*, the Holy Word.

Index of Time

Change is an index of Time that keeps everything in a constant flux. Change is an unimpeded Growth in two aspects: positive and negative. Growth in the positive aspect is incremental development in Space, Structure, Form, Colour, Texture, etc. Growth in the negative aspect is progressive decay. These aspects of growth are the *sine qua non* of Change to fulfil its Cyclical function: from seed to seedling to sapling to young plant to maturity to flower to fruit, and back to seed. In this sense, Growth means size or stage of development: to reach one's full growth or completed development. The unravelable mystery of God lies in that He can, and does, grow, as He wills, without going through the vicissitudes of change! In other words, He keeps His primary attribute, Truth, intact—everywhere, all the time as He wills. Truth connotes that God *actually* exists—He is not a figment of someone's imagination—even as He remains *unchanged*!

Colours of Time

Time is two-coloured: Day changes into Night, and Night into Day cyclically. It is this unrelenting change that Time brings about so coldbloodedly that Eternal Happiness can never be there. Flowers bloom in order to fade. People with happy faces hide behind them the saddest of sadness.

Path or Destination

There is widespread misunderstanding with regard to the choice of path that one must tread in order to reach God. In this connection,

it must be emphasised that God's Knowledge and God are ONE. Sunlight is there because the Sun is there. The Persian poet Sheikh Sa'adi tells an interesting story. Darkness once complained to God that Light is my arch enemy; it doesn't let me rest anywhere—and keeps constantly chasing me around. Summoned to God's presence Light said in defence: I haven't seen Darkness; How can I be inimical to someone I have never seen. The subtle inference is that no one ever attains to Godhood by treading the path of God's Knowledge i.e. His Light. Divine Light is not a Path; it is a Destination! If God is there, His Knowledge is there. If Sun is there, its Light is there. This is the secret Guru Arjan Dev is revealing when he avers: One possessed with God's Knowledge is God Himself! The two are invariably, and, inseparably at that, are TOGETHER.

Nirvana

Then, what is the other path one needs to follow for a Communion with God? The answer is: the Path of incurable Pain. When intense pain is experienced it awakens an irresistible urge to explore that which will take one to the realm of Bliss. This urge itself paves the way that may be called the Knowledge of Pain whence Man's Godward Journey begins. Gautama's example is the best illustration of this profound truth. He did not experience pain directly. He only saw a patient, an old man, and a dead body—which together aroused so deep an empathy within him that he voluntarily abandoned the royal bondages of a prince to set out to find out how one could be delivered from the pain of these three states of mortal life to attain *Nirvana*: a place or state characterised by freedom from pain and worry.

Knowledge of Pain

It is the Knowledge of Pain that sets one on the Path that would ultimately lead to Godhood. And there is no greater Pain than the fear of Death. Because the fear of Death hits one on the head almost fatally, one is led to celebrate one's birthday as an escape from the macabre reality. Guru Nanak's epigrammatic averment is that Pain becomes the cure while Pleasure transmutes the Consciousness into psycho-spiritual disease. Attached to one's home one remembers only Life, but the grave or the cremation ground makes one aware of the inevitability of Death. Saint Kabir used to visit the cremation ground to prevent his mind from wandering into the blind alleys of Life's transitory pleasures. Strange though it may sound, it was his Religion of Truth because he thus per force would remember God. He called this exercise the wise act of picking up pearls from the mortal dust of Life!

Spark of Divinity

Nature carries the Body to the Grave on its own without human intervention. But the Mind cannot go back to its home, God, *naturally*. Life is a product of Dust commingled with Divinity. Body is made of Dust and to Dust it returns. Mind is a spark of Divinity to which it returns only by *Dhyan Sadhna*. Without remembering *Kaal* [Death] it is impossible to remember *Akaal* [Deathlessness]. In this curious sense, *Dhyan Sadhna*, according to Saint Kabir, is reversing the Ganges' flow to its source *Gangotri* high up in the Himalayas. Being totally *unnatural* this psycho-spiritual workout is not everyone's cup of tea!

Four Stages of Life

Life passes through Four Stages: Pre-Natal; Childhood; Youth; and Old Age. None are identical; they are radically different from one another. Body and Mind together go through these conceptual Four *Yugas* called in Hindu Mythology: *Satyuga, Tretayuga, Dwaparyuga,* and *Kalyuga*. Change of yugas is a state of Mind as also a measure of Time. In every era people live in one or the other *yuga*. In all congregations at the places of Worship all the Four Yugas are present as different States of Mind. According to one estimate, a yuga changes after 2,500 years. 5,000 years ago, Rama, as incarnation of Lord Vishnu, lived in the Tretayuga. Krishna belonged to Dwaparyuga 2,500 years ago; and Guru Nanak 550 years ago in Kalyuga that is currently in progress. The difference between Tretayuga and Dwaparyuga is only 1500 years. And, in 10,000 years ago, all the Four Yugas had passed by. Guru

Nanak has clarified in an exclusive hymn that a yuga changes with the change in the Goal of Life. Interestingly, Yugas do not change either in the Animal Kingdom or the World of Birds and Reptiles and Insects. There are carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores.

Laws of Nature

In the World of Homo sapiens, everything changes: thoughts, goals, attitudes, aspirations, behaviour, lifestyle, and so forth. It happened in the case of Caveman, too. He first was a hunter; then a food-gatherer; and later became an agriculturist. With the change mentioned last, he started staying put in the same place to look after what he had sown, and eventually learnt to value the land which he thus came to possess. Although God had created the entire Earth for everyone, Man began to divide it, so much so that he invented the necessary weapons to defend and protect it. All this is still continuing even as national boundaries have become rigidly defined and demarcated. Animals, Birds, Reptiles, and Insects are not confined to anyone country. Siberian ducks migrate without passport and visa to India [Bhartpur, Udaipur, and the rivers of Punjab] in October through March, and then return to Siberia. For the Birds, the country is where the food is. They do not quarrel about geographic boundaries, religion, culture, and politics. Those creatures which belong to the lower forms of Life seldom go berserk. But Animals forced to live with Man [he calls them "domesticated"] go mad because their birthright to freedom as given to them by the Laws of Nature is forfeited by Man for his own selfish ends that he pursues with characteristic obduracy!

Man's Lifestyle

Man's lifestyle and all other related things change through Four Stages. During the prenatal stage, as a foetus, he gets everything through the umbilical cord. His mother's food builds his Body, and her thoughts make his Mind. This dependence soon disappears after he has taken birth, and Biology turns into Sociology through Culture and Social Ethics to an independent Psychological Entity. Childhood is a very crucial period because the enculturation that happens at this stage is a chief determining factor as to what kind of adult the individual would eventually be. In the World of Religion, no Stage of Life is too early or too raw to begin *Dhyan Sadhna*. Here the role of the mother as a non-formal teacher is of utmost significance. It is borne out by the historical evidence of what Prahlad's mother or Dhruva's mother or Farid's mother did so very conscientiously to make ordinary boys into Saints of eternal stature. The inference is that once one gets into the *right* mode of *Dhyan Sadhna*, its fruit can be had here and now—in this very world while living before death extirpates the Body. No otherworldly uncertain wait is warranted, because when water is drunk to quench thirst, the thirst is quenched *now*, not later.

Renunciatory Distaste

Earning bread and butter and cooking food entail all the arduous exercises centred largely round physical exertion. Hands earn and cook the food, which is eaten by the mouth. Outer food is very hard to earn and cook, but relatively very easy to eat. This food is converted into bodily energy only when is digested and assimilated into the physiological system. Ironically, inner food is extremely difficult to eat though it is comparatively very easy to prepare. It is cooked by the tongue but eaten through the ears. Cooking is chanting. Eating is listening. The inner food is converted into psychical power only when it is chewed by the Mind well and absorbed into the Consciousness. The best test of this process making progress is that spiritual-dining makes your psychological appetite keener, and gives you the taste of Divine Love—and ever-increasing hunger for it.

Vairag, in the context developed so far, assumes a new connotation: it is a *renunciatory distaste* for material food which is the staple diet of Lust, Anger, Greed, Acquisition, and Pride—beyond the natural needs of the Body for its physical subsistence.



INTRODUCTION

The Indian tradition that holds a peculiar mystique for the Western mind speaks of three celebrated Paths of Salvation: the Gyan [conventionally spelt as *Jnana*] Marg, the Yoga Marg, and the Bhakti Marg. The words "Marg" and "Yoga" are often used interchangeably. According to modern scientific evidence, Gyan or rational Knowledge uses the Left Hemisphere of the Human Brain; the Bhakti or devotion of the surrendered-self is a workout of the Right Hemisphere; and Yoga or communion-achieving discipline, which makes an enticing fetish of psycho-somatic exercises comprising bodily twists and turns in combination with a rigorous regimen of breathing methods, is a somewhat fallacious use of the Two Hemispheres! In this essay I shall attempt to show how these Three Paths are woefully inadequate, and end up as being mechanical exercises with some benefits-but far removed from their much-hyped claim of being the sacrosanct means of achieving spiritual ascent. As an alternative I have put in place a fourth method I call the NIRMAN MARG: The Creative Way, for the consideration of the peoples of the world to gain its eventual universal acceptability. My stimulation for such an irreverent step comes from life-long study of Hindu Mythology that is unsurpassed in the world for its incredible comprehensiveness of themes and subject-matter, profundity of thought, and inbuilt self-renewing mechanics of metaphysics.

64 Fine Arts and Four Yugas

Traditionally, there are 64 Fine Arts [Lalit Kalaayen] whose existence is so inescapable that the supernatural powers of the principal Hindu gods are reckoned by the number of Arts they have mastered. Lord Rama is reputed to be Chaudhai Kala Sampoorn [Master of 14 Arts] and Lord Krishna Solaih Kala Sampoorn [Master of 16 Arts]. Interestingly, this unknown fact points to something invaluable: India is the only country in the world in which Fine Arts are elevated to the status of Divinity. The Hindu Mythology also divides linear Time into Yugas [a Yuga is an inordinately long span of Time] so that the Four Yugas have a total of 4320000 years. To my reckoning, the figure 4,320 is a product of 70 [average pulse-rate] multiplied by 60 [minutes in an hour]. The Four Yugas are: Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga, and Kali Yuga. Kali Yuga is of 432000 years duration; Dwapara Yuga twice as much: 864000; Treta Yuga is thrice as much: 1296000; and Satya Yuga four times as much: 1728000. Rama was the presiding deity during the Treta Yuga and Krishna during the Dwapara Yuga.

Vishnu Avataras

Both Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were incarnations [*Avataras*, literally, they who ferry the lesser mortals' souls across the Sea of Maya (the illusory world) to Life Eternal] of Lord Vishnu who is the Preserver in the Hindu Triad: the other two being Brahma, the Creator; and Shiva, the Destroyer. The moot point to note is that despite being *Avataras* of Lord Vishnu, who is considered to be God, it took Lord Krishna lakhs of years to add two Arts to the repertoire of his predecessor Lord Rama. It would be helpful to remember that to master a Fine Art is no less difficult than acquiring supernatural powers by one of the three stated Margs. To understand the underlying principles for applying them to everyday life requires a complete grasp of Theory, Practice, Research, and Pedagogy vis-à-vis the four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. It is not difficult to appreciate that these instruments and the disciplines are clearly outside the scope of *Gyan Marg*, the *Yoga Marg*, and the *Bhakti Marg*.

Where I Began

Though trained as an Architect I have been dabbling in many fields (I have listed 55) which are customarily supposed to be not my own). My student days at Sir JJ College of Architecture at Bombay [1955-1960] provided me a great learning experience in interactive cosmopolitan culture. Our hostel on Land's-End Bandra was housed in military barracks situated on the seaside. The fury of the high waves during full-moon nights sang a rap no modern version can ever beat. The salubrious breeze cleansed as much my lungs as my mind—and I learnt to view Life without the coloured glasses of prejudices and biases which one inescapably inherits nurtured on hearsay and gossip spread by sick souls everywhere all the time in every community.

The Convocation Oath

My alma mater had the unusual ambience magnificently suited to Creativity. It provided me a sustained joy of being free—to think my own thoughts; to feel my own feelings; and to make my own decisions. At the convocation of the Bombay University, which I attended with two of my classmates, the oath administered made a deep impression on my mind. Although I do not remember all of it these few crucial ending words have stayed with me ever since I first heard them anything that I do should be worthy of this degree. Mine was the Bachelor of Architecture [B. Arch.], which means, at least for me, a Bachelor's self-consuming passion for Architecture!

Adolescent Versification

I had written a few poems when I was a student of Architecture, but my efforts in those days were by and large a raw expression of urges that characterise an adolescent's view of life. Most of these poems were thus the much-too-familiar stuff, with rhyming words, lewd imaginings, butterfly infatuations, and much else. It is not unlikely that some strains of adolescence are still there in the poems I had written in my mature years!

Limited Reading of Architectural Books

It may surprise many that, except Sir Banister Fletcher's monumental History of Architecture and another book, I did not read a single tome on Architecture during my student days! Oddly enough, just the same, I wanted to be a Teacher of Architecture—and thus, after a brief stint as Assistant Professor of Architecture & Town Planning at what's now called BITS Pilani, I joined as Lecturer at the newly-established Chandigarh College of Architecture (CCA) on 07 August 1961.

Extra-Professional Reading

My crazy habit of reading books on subjects other than Architecture continued though I did read per force some on my field too to carry on as a "successful" Teacher of Architecture. Adolescent versification surfaced again, and I started poetising my perception and view of Architecture. The "Why What Where When and How of Architecture", which I wrote in early-'sixties, was published in the Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects [JIIA], and reprinted later when the Editor retrieved it from the Institute's archives as "a refreshing piece of architectural literature".

Learning the Languages

Continuing the pursuit of Poetry as a parallel discipline, I have since written nearly 5,000 poems in English, Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi: the largest number being in Urdu. All these languages I have learnt by self-study that entailed reading from reference books—dictionaries and thesauruses by my side—and in consultation with those who knew these languages as accomplished writers. I published my Urdu poems in 1987 under the title "*Pyam-i-Dard-i -Bedarmaan*" [Message of the Incurable Pain], and English poetry as "Psychic Shadows" in 1991. The Foreword was written by Dr Mulk Raj Anand, India's most versatile literary artist. I also published poetry criticism with translation and transliteration of the selected works of 10 Urdu poets of Punjab which had the Foreword written by Dr Wazir Agha of Pakistan—the most celebrated poet-critic on the subcontinent. Being self-taught, both in language and the architectonics [prosody] of Poetry, I have enjoyed
full freedom in trying out all genres of English verse, so much so that I even invented the one I call "Sonnetimerick"!

Breaking Fresh Ground with Versification

During this time of self-learning and somewhat desperate experimentation, I thought that the traditional form of the Sonnet, though beautiful in many ways, is a bit too confined. Besides, the rhythm of verse slows down towards the end. I, therefore, tried out hybridisation of the sonnet with the limerick, thereby combining the profound with the ridiculous [a limerick is often called nonsense poetry]. But the essential beauty of the limerick, which is often overlooked, is that it has a trot rhythm, in the two shorter lines, embodies a refrain in the last one line which repeats the rhyme/rhythm of the two opening lines thus reflecting the idea contained therein, and closes the verse with a palpable punch.

Inventing the Sonnetimerick

I constructed a 15-line poem which I have nicknamed "Sonnetimerick". I produced nine poems in this new genre. As an inventor of this form of poetry, I had full freedom of devising the rhyme scheme, the length of lines, etc. I added one line to the 14-line traditional sonnet to show that the "Sonnetimerick" is a new invention. However, I have not made a simple addition of 14 'sonnet' lines to the five 'limerick' lines. Such a simplistic devising would have produced a 19-line poem that would be too long, and come off rather blandly. The selection of 30 Sonnets and nine Sonnetimericks, which I published in the anthology called *Psychic Shadows*, noted before, was titled *Thirty-Nine Sighs*. A sigh, in my view, is what creates as well as expresses *space*—and is a poet's way of scaling the Heavens!

Verse Preferences

The two forms of versification that I have liked the most are: the Quatrain and the Sonnet.

With Quatrain I have made forays into Urdu Poetry, and have since produced 3000+ verses, which I am told is the largest number ever written by any poet. This anthology was published in book-form under the title: *Shu'oor-i-Bekhudi* [The Consciousness (read: awakened native intelligence) of Unconsciousness]. My *takhallus* (pen-name) for Urdu poetry is *Ta'meer* (literally, Construction) carefully chosen to highlight the fact that when I started writing Urdu poetry in late-1960s I was the only architect in India to have come under the maddening spell of Urdu poetry whose beauty in many respects remains unrivalled. This publication was given the Best Book of the Year Award for 2019 in the Urdu Poetry Category by Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi. National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language [NCPUL] has bulk-purchased 40 copies of this book.

Form of the Sonnet

A Sonnet is a 14-line poem, written in predominantly Iambic Pentameter [a verse consisting of five stressed feet], following one or another of several set rhyme-schemes. The two characteristic Sonnet-types are the Italian (Petrarchan) and the English (Shakespearean). The Italian form is distinguished by its bipartite division into the octave and the sestet: the octave consisting of a first division of eight lines rhyming: **abbaabba**, and the sestet, or second division, consisting of six lines rhyming: **cdecde**, **cdccdc**, or **cdedce**. The English (Shakespearean) Sonnet, on the other hand, is so different from the Italian (though it grew from that form) as to permit of a separate classification. Instead of the octave and sestet divisions, this Sonnet characteristically embodies four divisions: three quatrains (each with a rhyme-scheme of its own) and a rhymed closing couplet. Thus, the typical rhyme-scheme for the English sonnet is: **abab cdcd efef gg**.

Sonnets and Shakespeare

I have written and published 275 Sonnets under the title *Songs of the Soul* (RoseDog Books, USA) as a reaction to what the indubitable William Shakespeare has achieved in his 154 Sonnets. Despite this awesome output he is still a Drama Poet because his poems lend themselves easily to theatrical exaggeration such as is indispensable in the unmistakable declamatory style of dialogue delivery on the stage. He is a matchless master of blank verse as well as metered/rhymed poetry. Although no comparison is intended yet my averment has cut to the quick many writers and critics who harbour pretensions of unscalable scholastic status!

William Shakespeare had a vocabulary of 15,000 words as against John Milton's 8,000. His observations, metaphors, imagery, and

everything else, which Great Poetry is supposed to possess, are all there in ample measure. And his popularity in the modern world is growing in spite of the fact that his *oeuvre* lacks the depth that classical Indian Poetry is replete with.

Concept of the 'Self'

A Western Mystic has admitted that "The concept of the 'Self' does not exist in the West!" Therefore, expecting it to be there in Shakespeare would be a grave folly. Then, why does he have an enduring reputation and growing popularity? The reason is that he operates at the level of *Rajas*, which is situated between *Tamas* and *Sattva*. Greed-driven Ambition, leading to a breathless rat race, is a product of *Rajas*, which is now a besetting sin of the entire world!

Three Gunas

According to the Indian philosophic thought, *Tamas, Rajas*, and *Sattva* are the three *gunas* [qualities or attributes] which create the mindboggling variety among human beings created from the Five Elements: Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Space. *Tamas* accounts for inertia and ignorance. *Rajas* is the motivator of ambition and motion. *Sattva* is psycho-emotional equipoise. In some measure, they are similar to Sigmund Freud's Id, Ego, and Superego, respectively.

My Journey's Bag and Baggage

Not only has my life been a Journey through the fascinating world of Poetry but also a curious awakening. I have used Poetry, Music, Metaphysics, Drawing, and Painting both as Expression of my view and way of life and as Commentary on the human condition in the modern world—which is a queer admixture of two extreme endowments of Humankind: the spent-up breath of Tradition and the breathless waywardness of Modernity! Poetry is Musical Meditation on the Nature of Reality in which metaphors become colourful pictures of an elusive Presence whose palpableness can be felt only in the Silence of the human Soul.

Music

Music is an Edifice of Sound. By this token, it resembles Architecture, and shares with this "Mother of all Arts" the four Elements of Space, Structure, Form, and Time. Space in Music has primary significance. That's why, when asked "What was his best music?" Mozart is said to have replied: "No-Music"! If the Form of Architecture is "Frozen Music", as Goethe has so succinctly stated its case, Music must be Architecture whose Structure progressively *thaws* into the Formlessness (and fluid grace) of Space and Time. In other words, Music regains thereby its genesis in *Nada* (i.e., Primal Sound) to become Architecture of the Soul!

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the art and science of thinking things out to their ultimate significance. As a major branch of philosophy it explores the nature of reality. Drawing is the language of instinct. A baby learns to draw much before it learns to speak. Colours have held undiminished fascination for Man ever since he appeared on the globe—and he expressed it in gay abandon in the cave paintings which are still unsurpassed for their raw vitality and unschooled aesthetic charm.

The Discipline of Critique

Between the two extremes of Creativity and Contemplation lies the discipline of Critique, which I have cold-bloodedly used to dissect the whys and wherefores of everything: culture, civilisation, religion, mysticism, spirituality, creativity, science, and what have you. This sustained, if somewhat irreverent, exercise has led me to understand the dubious self-sufficiency of what are the three celebrated Paths of Salvation: the *Gyan* [conventionally spelt as *Jnana*] *Marg*, the *Yoga Marg*, and the *Bhakti Marg*. The words "Marg" and "Yoga" are often used interchangeably. According to modern scientific evidence, *Gyan* or rational Knowledge uses the Left Hemisphere of the Human Brain; the *Bhakti* or devotion of the surrendered-self is a workout of the Right Hemisphere; and *Yoga* or communion-achieving discipline, which makes an enticing

fetish of psycho-somatic exercises comprising bodily twists and turns in combination with a rigorous regimen of breathing methods, is a somewhat fallacious use of the Two Hemispheres!

Meaning of Yoga

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root "*yug*" which means to yoke or bind together. It is thus a technique of attaining a state of union between Body, Mind, and Soul. The yoking effect of the practice brings the *individuated* components of the "self" back into balance with the whole organism, and the organism back into alignment with the cosmos.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga is the path of loving devotion to God. It is expressed by means of ritual worship, prayer and *Japm* (chant). It is the cultivation of a direct, intense personal relationship between the worshipper and the worshipped. The Path of *Bhakti* appeals particularly to those of an emotional nature. The *Bhakti Yogi* is motivated chiefly by the power of love and sees God as its perfect embodiment. Through prayer, worship, and ritual, he surrenders himself to God, channelling and transmuting his emotions into unconditional love or devotion or *Bhakti Yoga*.

In the phrase "Samaadhi Yoga", Samaadhi means "Transcendental Bliss" or "Ecstatic Union". The protagonists and the practitioners of this method believe that the consciousness of the individual human person is mystically absorbed into the Divine Essence—and the experience is one of Enlightening Ecstasy or Ecstatic Enlightenment.

Gyan Yoga

Gyan Yoga is the *Yoga* of Knowledge or Wisdom. It is the path of intellectual discrimination, the way of finding Brahman through analysis of the real nature of phenomena. The Gyan Yogi rejects all that is transient and apparent and superficial, Saying: "neti, neti," ("not this, not this". This is the most difficult path, requiring tremendous

power of will and strength of intellect. Drawing upon the philosophy of Vedanta, the *Jnana Yogi* uses his mind to inquire into its *own* nature. He perceives the space inside and outside a glass as different, just as we see ourselves as separate from God. *Jnana Yoga* leads the devotee to experience his unity with God *directly* by breaking the glass, and lifting the veils of ignorance. Before practising *Jnana Yoga*, the aspirant must fulfil the prerequisite of having integrated the lessons of the other *yogic* paths, for without selflessness and love of God, beside the strength of body and mind reinforced by *yogic* methods, the search for "self-realisation" can become mere idle speculation.

Thought, Feeling, Praxis

In my view, *Gyan Yoga* revolves round Thought; *Bhakti Yoga* is centred in Feeling; and the *Yoga Marg* has its foundation in praxis. To my experience, however, all these much-hyped Paths of Salvation are esoteric in that they warrant an exclusive effort of will that lies outside the normal schedule of human beings' workaday existence. Though it cannot be denied that, applied to the secular problems of *this* world, which Science observes, measures, systemises, records, hypothesises, and experiments with—only in physical terms of (tangible) Matter, they do benefit the practitioner in achieving certain *this*-worldly or materialistic goals in life. But beyond that all claims of achievement in spiritual ascent of consciousness are plain lies which can be tested by this simple measure.

Divine Endowment

Man, who is made in the image of God, the Supreme, Unrivalled Creator, must genetically be a creator himself, if only on a micro-scale. In other words, Creativity is a Divine endowment of all Humankind. Otherwise, how could the caveman create those matchless cave-paintings 35,000 or more years ago, especially when there were no art schools, no paints, and no brushes—nothing! It was the irresistible urge within the caveman to *create* that manifested itself as those sublime works of Art.

Mysticism

Mysticism is a quest for a hidden truth or wisdom ("the treasure hidden in the centre of our souls"). The subject has been gaining a renewed interest during the 20th century, thanks to the feeling of self-deracination that many persons experience in the modern world. Mysticism, or the mystical faculty of perceiving transcendental reality, is often called "a religion of the élite".

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is reputed to have introduced transcendental meditation (TM in American parlance) with a view to helping all and sundry to combat self-deracination, and to regain an integrated personality strong enough to withstand the stresses and strains of contemporary lifestyle. In spite of Jiddu Krishnamurti's persistent exhortations that "man himself is the problem" and that the only durable and definitive way of moving out of his self-created impasse is through "a choiceless inner seeking", the mystique of Mysticism has survived. Thus, there is a discomfiting truth in the British author Aldous Huxley's statement that "a totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane".

Why Communism Fell

That Karl Marx succeeded in establishing an awesome alternative to religion—which he put down as "opium of the masses"—speaks volumes for his extraordinary genius and his perpetual concern for the amelioration of the human condition. But that the new religion "Communism" which he instituted fell in barely 73 years is a grave tragedy—the unparalleled brilliance of dialectical materialism notwithstanding. Just as religion was wished away (even washed away, if only temporarily) as "opium of the masses", Marxism met its logical end, if ironically, in its fossilisation as "opium of the élite" that the *avantgardes* of Communism droolingly consumed in armchair discussions. This historic failure, which had celebrated only a few decades before an historic victory, lends credence to the Indian Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's terse observation that "Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself." As for **Science**, it is analytic and discursive and expresses its findings in precise and abstract formulas.

Mysticism, however, like **Poetry** (the highest of 64 Fine Arts, according to the Indian system which lists in the descending order: Poetry, Music, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture), depends more on paradoxes, metaphors, and an unusual use of language. Philosophies may lead to or follow from Mysticism, but they are not the same. Prayer and worship may form part of Mysticism, but they are viewed as means and not as essence. Also, they are usually continuations of sensory experience, whereas Mysticism is a pure unitary consciousness, or a union with God.

Creativity: A Spiritual Perspective

To create is to bring into being or form out of the available materials and means by the deployment of one's personal resources of intuition, imagination, reason, emotion. It also means to invest with a new form, office, or character, or dignity. The ability to create, or the state or quality of being creative, is Creativity. Creativity is the presentation of a new conception (Content) in an artistic embodiment (Form). This is the endowment given to Man by the Creator, the Supreme Being called God. Created in God's own image, every human being is *creative*, for life itself has been created as a self-renewing, self-sustaining creative process. The very fact that life goes on, and on, endlessly, without exhausting its potential as a creative surge, substantiates this view. Allama Iqbal, the Poet of the East (*Shai'r-i-Mashriq*) has underscored this axiom in his beautiful, inimitable style:

> Too ise paimana-i-imroz-o-farda se na naap Jaavidaan, paiham dawaan, hardam jawaan hai zindagi

Reckon it not by the measure of today and tomorrow Forever youthful and eternal, Life is always on the go.*

*The order of the phrases in the second hemistich has been altered to achieve the rhyming between the words 'tomorrow' and 'go'.

Mother Nature Inspires Man

The beauty and bounty of nature (called Mother Nature) is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for man to activate, develop, and express his creativity in innumerable ways. Nature, indeed, is the veritable Museum of Creativity in which Life (living matter as against inanimate objects) is both a process and a product. This subject has been dealt by me in detail in an essay titled 'Creativity' which appears elsewhere in this book.

In this essay, **Architecture** has been taken to mean a view and way of life, aimed at apprehending the beauty and bounty of truth revealed by Guru Nanak in his Bani, notably, the Japuji. It is, therefore, imperative to examine Creativity, as heretofore discussed, in terms of the Elements, Principles, Objectives, and Strategies, which it assumes as a discipline of Architecture. Architecture is by far the completest and most fascinating of man's activities, encompassing as it does (*actually*, not theoretically or wishfully) the four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. The Humanities speculates. Art expresses. Science investigates. Technology invents. Corresponding to these fields, respectively, are the time-honoured, universal values: Goodness (*Shivam*), Beauty (*Sundaram*), Truth (*Satyam*), and Utility (*Upyog*). The last value has been introduced by industrial economy with its characteristic emphasis on consumerism: a curious acquire-and-throw-away culture, which pleases the unappeasable whims and fancies of Mammon.

Architecture is the matrix of human civilisation. In Architecture, Creativity finds its acme, realises its full potential, and manifests its pristine glory. In Architecture, feeling is inferior to productive action, which is inferior to contemplation. Contemplation is the *raison d'être* of all right(-eous) action, which seeks to ameliorate the human condition thereby benefiting the entire humanity. Although Architecture is essentially the art and science of building, yet all buildings are *not* Architecture. Architecture is the only apt expression of the verity and value of Creative Mysticism.* Architecture creates and dwells in

^{*}The term "Creative Mysticism" was coined by me as a substitute for "Religion" for my second doctorate titled "CREATIVE MYSTICISM: A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with special reference to Japuji" (Panjab University, 2000 CE)

myriad symbols—embodying the values of Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Utility.

A brief description of the Elements, Principles, Objectives, and Strategies of Creativity, as they apply to Architecture, should be in order. This will help the reader grasp the import of these terms in fully understanding how *The Creative Way* activates the Mind to respond to them *actually* to make sense of them beyond their lack-lustre mechanical use in human communication during workaday existence.

Elements of Architecture are Space, Structure, and Form, whose basic aim is the creation of Shelter: one of the three basic necessities of Man, the other two being food and clothing. Shelter is composed of Structure and Form, with the Space enclosed by walls and roof serving as the refuge. These three Elements are there in all forms of art: literary, visual, performing. Dance, Drama, Music (Performing Arts) are Spacio-Temporal i.e., they exist both in Space and Time. In Painting and Sculpture [Visual arts], Time is frozen as an event corresponding to the Act of Creation (Genesis) which brought them into being. Though similar is the case with Poetry [Literary Art], the frozen time is thawed into fluid grace (rhythm) when poetry (the art of word-pictures-patterns) is recited (which it must be declaimed or chanted aloud, and *not* merely read—visually!) In Architecture, Form comprises outline, colour, and texture. It may be geometrical or free (i.e., biomorphic or organic with curves).

Principles are fundamental unchanging truths; the ultimate source or cause or origin of something. Together they constitute a comprehensive law or doctrine from which others are derived, or on which others are founded. Principles of Architecture are: Balance, Harmony, Proportion, Scale, Rhythm, and Unity. **Balance** is visual (painting, sculpture, architecture) or audial (poetry, music) equilibrium (i.e., a state in which opposing forces or tendencies neutralise each other).

The Principle of Balance is a prime requirement of all forms of Creativity that involves in the process planning, designing, and constructing.

Harmony results from combination or adaptation of parts, elements, or related things, so as to form a consistent and orderly whole. Leibnitz uses the term "pre-established harmony": a harmony between Mind and

Matter established before their creation, whereby their actions correspond though no communication exists between them. *Harmony is fundamental to all forms of Creativity as it produces a unity of effect or an organic whole, which gives aesthetic pleasure. In a democracy, only public buildings (i.e., structures for use by the public at large) deserve the monumental scale. In private buildings, the use of monumental scale is tantamount to a vulgar display of ill-acquired riches. It is an unsavoury echo of feudalism, to say the least!*

Proportion and **Scale** are interrelated as both deal with the problems of sizes and their relationships with one another. **Proportion** is the relation of one part or portion to another, or to the whole, or of one thing to another, with regard to magnitude, quantity, or degree. **Scale** deals with the whole, rather than parts, in terms of magnitude, quantity, or degree. Two forms of Scale are common: the Human Scale (a house), and the Monumental Scale (The Taj Mahal).

Rhythm is the measure of time or movement by regularly recurring impulses, sounds, etc., as in poetry, and music, and, by analogy, dancing. Of all the principles, Rhythm is the most fundamental as it is the only single principle found in all forms of Creativity, their mediumistic eccentricities notwithstanding.

The Order and Harmony of the Cosmos is sustained by the heartbeats, which Rhythm creates in the souls of stars, planets, and all forms of living matter.

Unity is the quality or fact of constituting a complex, systematic undivided whole so as to create an impression of being one as completein-itself. So fundamental is the principle of Unity that scarcely any other quality is needed for excellence in a work of Creativity. *A unique quality* of Unity, which has hitherto been ignored, is that, in a work of Creativity, even destruction must be represented as construction (i.e., as a composition of constituent parts carefully selected from out of the junk-yard randomness of the debris of destruction!)

The basic function of **Architecture** is to create shelter for the multifarious activities of human beings. This function has two aspects: utility, and aesthetic. Architecture must fulfil the needs for which it is created (utility), and must be a sublimation of sensory, perceptive, and cognitive experience (aesthetic). Architecture, as Built Environment, must create **Order** which is one of its chief Objectives. The others are

Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Without Order, conditions for efficient and purposeful working can never be established. *Insofar as Architecture is concerned, Nature is the best known embodiment of such Fundamental Principles which inspire, inform, and organise human Creativity.*

Beauty is the splendour of Truth, of Order (Unity), of Form [Jacques Maritain]. Beauty is the intellectualised sense which gives rise to aesthetic joy in the heart. By this token, Beauty is not accessible to the intellectually timid. **Goodness** is the aesthetics of character—a spontaneous, undistorted, qualmless expression of the inner person. Something is good when it promotes health, welfare, or happiness. **Utility** as the fitness for perfect use is the power to satisfy the wants of people in general. It gives one the all-important insight into the ultimate scheme of things that nothing that exists is without use, for the cosmos is an active conglomerate of interrelationships, interdependences, and interactions.

Strategy aims at the chalking out of an Action Plan to achieve the desired goal with a minimal waste of space, time, energy, and material resources. A strategy has the twin parameters/criteria of Economy and Efficiency. Economy is judicious handling, rather than greedy hoarding, of material resources. Efficiency is the approximation of the output with the input so that everything is optimised during the Act of Creation. *Optimum is minimum put to maximum use!*

Note: Text used in this article has been excerpted from the original that appears on pages 229-234 of this book with a view to making the former complete in itself.

The Creative Way Has Intrinsic Resilience

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it should not be difficult to grasp the intrinsic resilience of *The Creative Way* vis-à-vis the characteristic limitations of the three conventional methods. The *Gyan Marg* typically withdraws from the warp and woof of the Secular by taking resort to the so-called Religious domain. The rules and regulations of the Method come in conflict with the imperatives of workaday existence, which is far from being neat and clean. It is a tangled mesh of 'good, bad and the ugly' and often baffles the practitioner with respect to choices he must make to stick to the prescribed course. This curious difficulty arises from the fact that the *Gyan Marg* is praxis with the practical missing from its scope. The practitioner must apply its benefits, if any, to problems, which the method patently ignores while he is engrossed in acquiring sacrosanct 'knowledge'. This difficulty is compounded when such 'knowledge' focusing on the 'ethics' of conduct is pitted against the 'aesthetics' of concepts and their actual construction into artefacts by the instrumentality of Creativity. Also, according to my observation extended over several years, 'knowledge' per se can never overcome life's problems, much less pave the way for *mukti* (salvation)—which every Indian is irremediably conditioned to seek—if intellectual grit, courage of conviction, and moral strength are missing in the *Gyani* (the learned one).

What Gyan Marg Hasn't Achieved

India's 72 years of 'working anarchy' euphemistically called the 'world's largest democracy' is a case in point. The many varied genres of politicians and bureaucrats who numbers run in thousands are fully knowledgeable in terms of the menace of corruption and they talk very convincingly in public lectures, often drawing from the Indian scriptures and folklore, but what they have succeeded in achieving are countless scams and scandals that have left no domain of public life unpolluted and untainted. It is not surprising that they should have thrown ethics to the wind in a country that prides itself for having a great spiritual tradition on a land that was once upon time inhabited by innumerable saints and sages. A friend has suggested that the sorry state of affairs that we encounter in India today is the malaise of an overdose of the spiritual potion which the Indians were administered through the centuries including their longdrawn slavery to invaders, marauders, and expansionists. When things do not happen as expected the failure is customarily attributed to lack of political will which, at bottom, is a compounding of intellectual grit, courage of conviction, and moral strength, as pointed out before. These qualities do not come naturally; they must be painstakingly cultivated by orienting one's consciousness from focus on self-aggrandisement to general weal through altruistic progression. Creativity creates a sense of Unity, not possible by any other means or a method, which melds thoughts, words, and feelings into a single activity.

Why Bhakti Marg Falls Short of Aim

The Bhakti Marg suffers from a similar intrinsic disability. It warrants total surrender of the self to the deity one chooses to worship. Surrender of the 'self' means the decimation of the 'ego' that embodies 'free will'. It's like saying God will do everything as He wills and "I'm totally exempt from the arduous responsibility of using my mind to discriminate between right and wrong; good and evil; and virtue and vice". In my view, this is an insult to God who has given one Brain to use. Total surrender can come about only by God's own will so that devotion becomes active doing rather than remain passive deifying. Saints like Kabir, who are born in centuries, have pointed out that their mindset has been so divinely conditioned that they can engage their hands in fruitful work while fixing their mind on God. This is acceptable, but saints have never been factory workers where the complexity of mechanical operations and on-job work-pressure won't let it be a let-go case without serious risk of life-threatening accidents. Therefore, a pragmatic way would be to make work itself an item of worship, which will come about only if one brims with the joy of doing it-making it unnecessary to look for pleasure outside and after the task. In the latter case, there will certainly be strains of duress, one's pretensions to the contrary notwithstanding!

Where Yoga Marg Comes Amiss

The book titled *Yoga sutras* is, according to popular belief among the Hindus, associated with the name of Patanjali, also called Gonardiya and Gonikaputra (flourished 2nd century BC or 5th century AD). The name Patanjali is obviously a pseudonym, since it denotes no caste and implies divine descent from the Great Serpent, *Seshanag*, of Hindu mythology. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, "The *Yoga sutras* seems to span several centuries, the first three volumes apparently written in the 2nd century AD. Authorities therefore tend to credit more than one author writing under this name, although there is wide variance in opinion. There is a possibility that many men used this

name, as it was used by the authors of a number of other works on such diverse subjects as medicine, metrics, music, and alchemy."

According to Swami Prabhavananda, author of *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* (aphorisms), this treatise is not the original exposition of a philosophy, but a work of compilation and reformulation. References to yoga practices—spiritual disciplines and techniques of meditation which enable a man to achieve unitive knowledge of the Godhead—are to be found already, in the Katha, Svetasvatara, Taittiriya, and Maitrayani Upanishads, very many centuries earlier. Indeed, the yoga doctrine may be said to have been handed down from prehistoric times.

"Asana means two things: the place on which the yogi sits, and the manner in which he sits there. With regard to the first meaning, the Gita tells us: "The place where he sits should be firm, neither too high nor too low, and situated in a clean spot. He should first cover it with sacred grass, then with a deerskin; then lay a cloth over these." According to Swami Prabhavananda, "Such were the traditional requirements; but any convenient, steady seat will do as well".

Much Ado about Asanas

Patanjali's book contains 195 *Sutras* out of which only one deals with *Asanas*. When he himself has specified that the posture chosen should be firm and comfortable it is extremely hard to accept the stodgy fact that so many *Asanas* would have been invented as authentic yogic postures for the benefit of various organs of the human body especially when anatomy and physiology were little known in India during the period when *Yoga Sutras* were reformulated. Science as an intellectual discipline that has brought the world from the Stone Age to the IT Era is essentially a field of endeavour unique to the West. Therefore, to speak of Yoga as a scientific praxis would be highly irrational, if not downright unscientific.

Patanjali lays down an eightfold path consisting of aids to Yoga: restraint (*Yama*), observance (*niyama*), posture (*asana*), regulation of breathing (*pranayama*), abstraction of the senses (*pratyahara*), concentration (*dhyana*), meditation (*dharana*), and trance (*samaadhi*).

These esoteric exercises are so arduous that even in India—the land of yoga's origin, with a population of 1.3 billions—that those who may be doing them with claim of mastery and promised benefits would be woefully few and far between. A close friend of mine, Brahmin by caste and one of the most learned among Chandigarhians, who had been doing Yoga for half-a-century with undiminished religious zeal, has lately given it up in utter disgust confessing that no benefit of any consequence has accrued to him from being a committed Yogi! My quatrain on *Pranayama* as an exercise in futility says it all.

> What control on the Mind can *Pranayama* have? This wretch even in sleep constantly runs Keeping vigil on how it tends to ill behave Might help it tread the path it now shuns

Science As Validation of Rationality

Science is the function of the Left Hemisphere of the human brain as has been demonstrated in the laboratory by the American neurosurgeon Dr Roger Sperry who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1981. If there be any benefits that accrue to the practitioner of yoga they are quite clearly the result of exercise far removed from the mystique of *asanas*. In simpler terms, such benefits can be explained thus. There are two major elements which keep the body fit and healthy: Blood and Oxygen called *prana* or life-breath in yogic parlance. Blood reaches the food to the remotest parts of the body through the arteries and removes waste via the veins where Oxygen in the lungs purifies it. In younger years the arteries and veins are clean, open and elastic and let the Blood maintain its two-way flow without any resistance—and the heart is thus not under pressure in doing its job as a pump.

Exercise, not Yoga, Helps

In advancing age Blood-flow is helped along by exercise such as brisk walk and PT drill. Parts of the body not receiving the nutrition

develop what I call 'necrosis' or temporary death that is brought to a person's notice by pain. This pain in any part of the body is a symptom *not* a disease but, oddly enough, rather than listen to the warning one prefers to take pain-killers. An analgesic numbs the pain but keeps the cause. My own experience is that pain must be experienced to the hilt because it makes you reflect on the cause by taking your consciousness away from the euphoria of pleasure, if only temporarily. This reflection is crucial because without it one cannot access the deeper layers of the *élan vital*, which is the starting point of true meditation: the primary praxis for the spiritual ascent of consciousness.

Spirituality is Vertical Growth

In short, Spirituality is attained as Vertical Growth in terms of the Ascent of Consciousness—how high it can go and how long it can rest there without plummeting as mercury does in blood-pressure testing would be able! The reason for my insistence is plain enough for even the novitiate to appreciate and grasp it. Like Water, Consciousness has the natural disposition of flowing *downwards*—and thus the Three Margs were developed to raise it upwards from the root of the spine to the pineal gland in the brain. Spirituality is measured by the position of Consciousness on the vertical axis.

One would know this by asking this plain question directly!

Has the practitioner using his preferred method of 'salvation' gained control on the proverbial Five (inner) Foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Acquisition, and Pride?

If one asks this discomfiting question dispassionately and impartially, one would find to one's utter dismay that the so-called Swamis, Yogis, and TV Gurus themselves fail the test miserably. And what is even worse is that despite this awesome failure they have gained enormously in popularity thereby succeeding in becoming multi-millionaire owners of movable assets and immovable property. That is the wondrous success story of glib talkers and gullible listeners whose common ground is clever phrasing of pseudo-knowledge vis-à-vis utter ignorance rooted in inaction—achieved through dubious means that is an exact antidote of Spirituality in all its subtle ramifications! Yet they love public appearance and applause like any uninitiated mortal being—and more often than not get embroiled in unpalatable controversies bordering on sex-exploits, scams, and scandals.

Recapitulation

Nirman Marg or the Creative Way has the enviable distinction of being holistic and inclusive. Whether you belong to the Humanities, Art, Science, or Technology stream, Creativity impels you to widen your horizons, deepen your feelings, make your thoughts profounder, lets your imagination soar sky-high, and calls forth your intuition into productive activity. Clearly and generously drawing upon your own inner resources it creates a circuit for the flow of psycho-emotional energy that is self-renewing. That is how Creativity is Original: You have touched, explored and exploited the source (the origin) within yourself. Creativity, in this special, though little-known, respect, is a three-prong process: (i) It is propelled by an inner compulsion, (ii) It is reinforced by an inner conviction, and (iii) It is sustained by an inner satisfaction—without favour or fear.

Creativity is Synergy

In the singular Act of Creation all the Elements of Space, Structure, Form, and Time come into interaction synergistically to make the Principles like Balance and Rhythm play their role spontaneously. The presence of Balance and Rhythm in the created artefact is an externalisation of the Balance and Rhythm that the Man, the Artist, experiences within himself as palpable upsurge. The Order and Beauty embodied in what he creates are extensions of the Order and Beauty which have aligned and enriched his Consciousness. Let me recall the primary functions of the four fields of human endeavour: the Humanities think; Art expresses; Science explores; and Technology invents.

Exclusive Emphasis Creates Imbalance

It is crucial to realise that exclusive emphasis on the development on any one of these at the cost of the other three is bound to disturb Balance and Rhythm of the Mind which is nothing but an infinitely complex network of vibrations of psycho-emotional energy at varied frequencies. When this happens, which does more often than not, the person becomes uncommunicative because his area of dialogue has been constricted by his own unwise choices. Exclusive emphasis creates 'imbalance' at the cost of keeping communication almost completely out of man's survival kit.

The Vishnu Factor

In its extended sense, Communication is the reaching out which living beings continually do as signals to be in touch with other creatures for survival, growth, and fulfilment. This is what I call the 'Vishnu Factor' which has all along been ignored ever since the time Lord Vishnu was conceived and deified many centuries ago. Conventionally and customarily, we call Lord Vishnu the Preserver or, by extension, the Provider although his major role is also one of Communicator. This has to be so because his task is far too onerous than that of the other two principle deities [Brahma and Shiva] in the Hindu pantheon of 330 million gods and goddesses.

Deities' Different Deeds

Brahma creates, and Shiva destroys—that's about all they do as gods. But Vishnu must take care of all that happens to the creatures during the unequal but endlessly continuous spans of Life between their Birth and Death. That's precisely the reason why Lord Vishnu—not Brahma, not Shiva—must assume ever-new incarnations (*Avataras*) for the redemption of the entire human race. He provides the wherewithal for Lord Brahma's progeny, protects it from unending mishaps—and communicates the value of what must be preserved from the wanton destruction of Lord Shiva. At this crucial juncture, it is best to be reminded of what Lord Krishna, the eighth Avatara of Lord Vishnu, proclaims in the Gita:

> Yada yada hi dharmasya, glanir bhavati bharata Abhyuth-thanam adharmasya Tadat-manam srijamyaham Sambhawami yugay yugay Whenever righteousness declines And unrighteousness increases, I incarnate myself as a human; I come into being from age to age.

Why 'Righteousness' Declines

In the context of what we are discussing it should be not be out of place to ask why 'righteousness' declines and 'unrighteousness' increases. According to the tenets of *Nirman Marg* the answer is plain and clear: Because Balance is disturbed and Rhythm goes out of tune with the Cosmos. It is not therefore surprising to assert that when the *Creative Way* takes care of these principles in the Act of Creation *actually*, not notionally or merely philosophically, every time it is performed there can never be any question of Balance being disturbed and Rhythm going out of Life. Besides, Creativity brings forth Order in which there is place for everything and everything is in place—and Beauty that is the splendour of Truth, the primary attribute of God: Generator, Operator, and Destroyer. Beauty fulfils Man's most basic aesthetic need, and Aesthetics is the chief, if unsuspected, motivator of Life's onward march on planet Earth.

Darwin and the Dawn of Scientific Temper

When Darwin showed the validity of Evolution by the principle of 'Natural Selection' until life evolved to the stage of the *Homo sapiens* species 'Scientific Temper' was born whereby Man, the wise (*Homo sapiens'* literal meaning), could objectively look at himself and the world he lives in and dreams about. However, he continues to exercise his preferences of taste so much so frequently that he sets aside 'Scientific Temper' and lets Aesthetics become his unrebuttable 'Cultural Selection'. This peculiar principle that directs human life is both universal and timeless. Choices (implying aesthetic preferences) of Food, Clothing, Shelter, spouses, children, vocations, avocations, relationships, and what have you—invariably govern as much our daily lives as special occasions, festivals, and cultural functions. This over-powering choice becomes our second nature until we become totally enslaved by it. A time comes in our lives when we start attaching more importance to Beauty (Aesthetics) than Goodness (Ethics). This Beauty, however, is not the refined type that qualifies it to be the Splendour of Truth. It is a crude version of taste for the things noted above.

Strategy vis-à-vis Creativity

In the context of Creativity, Strategy as is the Science of War assumes a new meaning and function. It diverts Consciousness inwards to declare a never-ending war against the Five Inner Foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride. This war is best fought in the *Kurukshetra* (the place where the war of *Mahabharata* was fought with Lord Krishna as the charioteer of Arjuna) of Mind when it is engrossed in the Act of Creation. This war is by no means easy, for whatever Strategy one may think up it is already known to the enemies: hence, their invincibility. This Strategy calls for constant vigil and requires unremitting planning—foresight with organisational ability that develops more and more with each animated indulgence with Creativity—as a never-ending adventure into the realm of the human spirit.

Summing Up

My poetic perceptions of Creativity are captured in the following Urdu verses with their English rendering by way of Summing Up the diverse dimensions of this discourse.

Creativity is a Prerequisite of Humanity!

Naghma-zan, sha'ir, musawwar, kuchh to ho warna tira Ai bashar, is daihr mein aana na aana ek hai

Be a singer, poet, painter, at least something, otherwise O Man, your advent into the world is a living demise!

Poetry is the Highest of Fine Arts!

Funoon-i-lateefa mein rutba sukhan ka Buland itna jaise iram ke chaman ka Byaan-i-saleem iska wahid hunar hai Taqaaza yahi to hai takhleeq-i-fan ka

Among the Fine Arts the status of Poetry Is as high as that of the Garden of Eden Perfect expression is its unique artistry This, indeed, is Creativity's signal condition

Music is the Soul of Truth in the Cosmos!

Main hoon navaaye rooh-i-bashar kaayenaat mein Sun lo mujhe na aaoon nazar kaayenaat mein Arpan Saraswati ke dar-i-paak par rahoon Izhaar-i-haq hai mera hunar kaayenaat mein

I am the Sound of Man's Soul in the Cosmos Hear you may, but Me you can't discern in the Cosmos I pay constant obeisance at Saraswati's sacred door My Art is Truth's divine expression in the Cosmos

Painting shows the colours of Soul's dreams!

Taab-i-tasawwuraat se tasveer ban gayi Takhleeq apni aap hi tadbeer ban gayi Pesha se hai musawwari ka martaba buland Fankaar ke liye to yeh taqdeer ban gayi

A picture gets done by the imagination's power Creativity by itself finds its own best technique Art of Painting is higher than its vocational stature For the Painter it's his destiny unique

Sculpture breathes Beauty into inert Materials!

Fan but-taraash ka hai niraala funoon mein Rakhta hai kya byaan ki ravaani junoon mein Baatin se zauq-o-shauq se zaahir use kare Duniya jo mooraton ki base is ke khoon mein

Novel among the arts is art of the Sculptor It has the flow of expression that in passion swells From the hidden it manifests by taste 'n' fervour The world of idols that in his blood dwells

Architecture is the Matrix of Civilisation!

Khalvat kee fizaaon mein karoon jalvatein paida Jo khaak mein pinhaan hain woh hon sooratein paida Utroon main lahoo ban ke rag-i-sang mein jis dam Hon Taj-o-Ajanta see haseen mooratein paida

In desolate Emptinesses I'm creating Habitations Forms that lie hidden in dust become Manifestations When I course like blood thro' the veins of Stone Taj-'n'-Ajanta emerge as Beautiful Configurations

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have tried to show that any method aimed at the understanding of the illusory nature of the Phenomenal World that has the intrinsic disadvantage of being divisive in terms of warranting exclusive time and talent would not work, its antiquity and sacrosanctity notwithstanding. Man being a pleasure-hunting and pain-dreading social animal has irreversible tendencies to follow a path, a praxis, and a pattern of behaviour that assures him of joyous wonder and deep psycho-emotional fulfilment. If the Life in the created world be a divine sport, such as Hinduism untiringly professes it to be, it must be approached, explored, and admired in an attitude of playfulness and in gay abandon. Life must be experienced by living it to the hilt in terms of active participation, rather than passive observation and speculation, by calling forth one's repertoire of all powers-of thinking, expressing, exploring, and inventing-synergistically so that each activity indulged in becomes both work and worship steeped in joyous wonder at the beauty and bounty of Nature.

Man in God's image

In the foregoing exposition an attempt has been made to show that Creativity, which is the common endowment of all Humankind, has that potential which extends rather than exhausts by indulgence because it is intrinsically self-renewing. Because God, The Creator, has made Man in His own image and likeness, every human person is a creator too in their own right—and indulgence in Creativity is the most valid and authentic expression of a natural instinct of Lust for Life. As a beneficiary of this divine dispensation it devolves upon Man to be in creative partnership with God to promote and perpetuate His Divine Design. When he does so without fear or favour he spontaneously practises Ethics: the Aesthetics of conduct because he is being true to himself.

Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram

Thus Truth (Satyam), Goodness (Shivam), and Beauty (Sundaram) become integrated with the practitioner's view and way of life which, by its extended productivity, fulfils the value of Utility too. It need hardly be stressed that these values are both universal and timeless-transcending the artificial notions of the East (Orient) and the West (Occident). The East and the West are two hemispheres, the Right and the Left, of the human Brain. If the twain were intended never to meet, as Rudyard Kipling ferociously asserted in his awesome ignorance, God wouldn't have provided the corpus callosum as the bridge between the Right and Left Brains. In this peculiar sense that nobody has hitherto explored I dare say that to be an Atheist is not to use the *corpus callosum*, and to do so is to fall in line with God's Divine Design-and thus be a Theist. Because the Scientist prefers the word Nature I must use it to proclaim with all the moral force at my command the discomfiting truth that Theism and Atheism are not any more questions of Faith and Disbelief: they are the unignorable facts of being natural and unnatural credos of peoples of the world!

Those who may still feel the sting of scepticism must retire to the delicious silence of Aloneness to give Creativity a fair chance for their own sake in deference for the *life* they hold so dear and sacrosanct.



Guru Nanak Dev has explicitly dealt with the problem of Origin Gof the Universe, question of Involution/Evolution; conflict between Faith and Reason, and the dire need to use one's mind for discriminating between good and evil alongside scores of other opposites, and so forth. What follows is furnished in the hope that earnest seekers of Truth would read the text with the seriousness that it deserves so that they are enabled to approach the sacred scripture in a new light and with renewed zeal.

About the Origin of the Universe, the Guru says:

weil na paayeea pandatee ji hovai leikh(u) puraan(u) wakhat(u) na paaiyo kaadeeya ji likhan(i) leikhu kuraan(u) thiti waar(u) na jogi jaanai rut(i) maah(u) na koyi ja karta sirthee kao saajei aapei jaanai soyi [Japuji, Pauri 21]

In Pauri-21 of Japuji, he poses the question: What was the time, the moment, the day, the date, the season, and the month, when the Universe was created? Then he answers it using what I call 'Logic of the Soul' that convinces without resorting to the high-decibel noise of rhetoric of Metaphysics: If these details were known to the Pandits and the Hindu religious scholars, they would have written them in the Puranas. Similarly Qazis would have recorded

them in the Holy Quran if they had knowledge of these things. Neither is the day and the date nor the month or the season known to the Yogis. The Creator alone knows when he had brought into existence the Universe.

Guru Nanak sees no opposition between Faith and Reason. However, he enjoins upon the seeker of Truth to use *his* own Mind and [not be led away by hearsay or priestly propaganda] to resolve for himself the apparent conflict between Faith and Reason, representing as the pair does the unending debate on Religion versus Science.

> Akli sahib(u) seviai akli paayiai maan(u) Akli parh kai bujhiyai akli keechai daan(u) Nanak(u) aakhai raah(u) ih(u) hor(i) galla saitaan(u) (SGGS, p. 1245)

Both the cyclical (Involution) and linear (Evolution) processes of the Phenomenal (Objective) World [as contrasted with the Noumenal (Subjective) World] are stressed in the architectonics of Cause and Effect. In doing so, the Guru has succeeded in recovering the individual's quintessential organic unity as soul-mind-body entity that forever remains in a flux of *Progression* in Time-Space Continuum.

According to Professor HS Virk, an accomplished scientist and celebrity Sikh scholar, "Stephen Hawking believes in Big Bang but does not accept God as the creator of Universe. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, critically examined the theories of creation of the universe prevalent in India before his advent, from pre-historic times to the end of 15th century. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (SGGS), the Sikh holy book, compiled in 1604 CE, deals with the problem of origin of life and creation of the Universe in the most scientific manner. The revelatory nature of scientific vision of Guru Nanak is based on the premise that there is a Creator of the Universe. The Sikh hypothesis of creates Himself and then he creates Nature (Qudrat). Nothing can happen without the Will of Creator (God). Guru Nanak in SGGS

elaborates different stages of creation and his ideas are forerunner of the Big Bang model of creation, which was formulated during the twentieth century."

The foregoing examples are reason enough to require of every individual human person a conscientious study of SGGS followed by sustained reflection [*Vichaar*] on its profound and comprehensive contents with a view to not only making sense of the prevalent chaos that wayward scholarship has created and made tedious by brusque dismissal of Religion by the Scientists who pass unholy judgments without taking the trouble of reading the diverse scriptures of World Religions themselves but also to remain on the Path of Righteousness without fear of sudden derailment due to such sudden tremors as are caused by unexpected conflicts entailing War of Words. The text that follows attempts to show that the problem is far from simple, and requires sustained scrutiny by every individual human person to form a sensible view of life and to remain sane in the midst of the world gone haywire.

The ground for War of Words between the Theologians and Scientists rests on the premise that Science can tolerate being unsure about some things but it cannot entertain the notion that there are phenomena in the everyday world of Nature that require supernatural intervention. Such an unwelcome requirement would emasculate Science, which is the common belief stubbornly held by all Scientists. Yet that requirement is precisely what Creationists, by definition, want to establish. Darwinism responds to this challenge with scientific excommunication — "It's not Science"—not unlike the smug declaration of Theologians that Religion begins where Science ends. Their reaction often causes Darwinists to dismiss too hastily the valid scientific points Creationists raise against aspects of Darwinism or Evolutionism. In this way, Darwinism behaves much like a Religion with its own cherished, unquestionable beliefs. And thus, for explaining Evolution and the Origin of Life on Earth, a "Holy War" is being waged by the self-avowed adversaries. The word *Evolution* originally meant "opening" or "unfolding", as when a bud becomes a flower. A faithful English paraphrase for "evolve" is "turn out." After Darwin,

however, Evolution came to mean the process whereby prokaryotes ultimately became people. Yet Darwin admonished himself, "Never use the words higher or lower". And he scrupulously avoided all variants of the word "Evolution" in his *Origin of Species*, until the very last sentence. A *Prokaryote* is a microscopic single-celled organism which has neither a distinct nucleus with a membrane nor other specialised organelles, including the bacteria and cyano-bacteria.

In popular portrayal the "Creation versus Evolution" debate is shown to be focused on "Religion versus Science". In this mass-media-created view worldwide, Creation is revealed as being religious and Evolution as being scientific. Unfortunately, if you do not agree with this label, you too are labelled. From my personal experience, I know one such 'unfortunate' case although the victim did not reveal to me his full background and whereabouts clearly. He said that he was forced to do so because the "Creationists" were chasing him from city to city, and from country to country, for holding radical views which challenge the biblical authority. He called me over to the Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia Centre on the Punjab Engineering College Campus in Chandigarh. At that time he was a fugitive from London, and wanted to make my personal acquaintance because he had been impressed by my articles published internationally. The first question that he posed to me unnerved me, and is still haunting me after a decade or more. "Have you made any disciples? If not, make some promptly; otherwise, all that wonderful creations of yours would go to the grave with you!" At any rate, to revert to the unsavoury debate, regardless of whether you are a Creationist or an Evolutionist, if you disagree with the stereotype, you are condemned and "exposed" as a religious fanatic who is secretly trying to pass religion off as science or, even worse, trying to disprove Science in order to redeem a ridiculous, unscientific, religious worldview. However, the fact is that neither model of origins of the Universe has been established beyond a reasonable doubt (otherwise, the theory of evolution wouldn't be called the "Theory" of Evolution). Whether we like to admit it or not, those of us who subscribe to the Theory of Evolution propounded by Charles Darwin do so by faith. And while the recognition of design in

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biology may have theological implications, it is not based upon religious premise. It is based on unremitting observation, empirical evidence, and rationale-at least in India-of Rishis [Seers] and Sages. Those who may feel revulsion on my suggestion may do well to remember that it was Gregor Mendel, an Austrian scientist, teacher, and Augustinian prelate, who lived in the 1800s, and experimented on garden pea hybrids while living at a monastery and eventually got accepted by the world scientific community as the "Father of (modern) Genetics". This crucial point I stubbornly used to make until I found it to be vindicated by Science that human brain is an organic whole with potentialities both for Science [Left Hemisphere] and Religion [Right Hemisphere]-and now present it with unequivocal force. The implication is that the best of Scientists making a balanced use of the brain have natural leanings towards Religion, and vice versa. To my utter joy, bordering on a sense of historic victory, I now find that this hunch of mine is corroborated by dozens of Scientists including many Nobel Laureates in Science as anyone can see on the Internet under "God Evidence". My revelation convinces me that neither adversary in the War of Words need entertain a sense of shame or qualms of conscience in accepting that Religion and Science are perfectly compatible ways of apprehending the two worlds of Noumena and Phenomena because these are perfectly valid and truthful pursuits in letter and in spirit.

Seen in the light of the foregoing exposition, CREATIONISM versus EVOLUTIONISM debate is, at bottom, a restless curiosity about origins of the Universe and Life on Earth, which is popularly labelled to be an ongoing war between Reason and Religion. This unceasing War of Words, however, boils down to these questions: *How did we get here? Were we created or did we evolve randomly? Are we the product of purposeful intelligence or are we merely the end result of countless cosmic accidents? Finally, does it even matter?*

Before moving further let us have a look at the definitions of these two terms.

CREATIONISM is the belief that the Universe and living organisms originate from specific acts of divine Creation, as in the biblical account, rather than by natural processes such as Evolution.

Since the well-known conflict started in the West, reference to Genesis in The Bible is inescapable, even though other World Religions are not invulnerable to such attacks by the scientific community. Evolutionism is a theory of biological Evolution especially that was formulated by Charles Darwin. It supports and promotes advocacy of or belief in biological Evolution. Evolution, in general, is a change in the heritable characteristics present in a population. It may be produced by natural selection, sexual selection, artificial selection, genetic drift, mutation pressure, or migration.

"Evolution teaches that as species evolve they eventually reach ideal population levels. As species advance, superior species eliminate inferior species should be eliminated for the preservation of superior bloodlines and for the conservation of essential resources. "Nature" doesn't desire "the mating of weaker with stronger individuals, even less does she desire the blending of a higher with a lower race, since if she did, her whole work of higher breeding, over perhaps hundreds of thousands of years, might be ruined with one blow." "Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows." And as humans are merely a species of animal, we have no intrinsic value and are therefore by no means exempt from "the war of nature". Thus, we have Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) asking the rhetorical question, "Should I not also have the right to eliminate millions of an inferior race that multiplies like vermin?" Hitler, of course, is remembered for murdering more than 6,000,000 individual human beings, all of whom he deemed to be inferior members of the species. Was Hitler wrong? Did he misinterpret and misrepresent the theory he claimed to cherish so much? Apparently not. Renowned British evolutionary anthropologist and anatomist Sir Arthur Keith (1866-1955), who was knighted in 1921, came to Hitler's defense, "Hitler is an uncompromising evolutionist, and we must seek for an evolutionary explanation if we are to understand his actions", Keith reassured us, "The German Führer, as I have consistently maintained, is an evolutionist; he has consciously sought to make the practice of Germany conform to the theory of evolution." Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), another ardent evolutionist from Russia, surpassed even Hitler in zeal, murdering at least ten times as many "inferiors" (estimates range from 60,000,000 to 100,000,000 people). Was Stalin wrong? What about Pol Pot? Well, not if you subscribe to the evolutionary worldview. In fact, to the philosophically consistent, uncompromised evolutionist, Hitler and Stalin ought to be considered role models." [https://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/creation-vs-evolution.htm]

Charles Darwin popularised the term "natural selection", contrasting it with "artificial selection". The latter in his view is intentional, whereas natural selection is not. He described natural selection as analogous to artificial selection, a process by which animals and plants with traits considered desirable by human breeders are systematically favoured for reproduction. While genotypes can slowly change by random genetic drift, natural selection remains the primary explanation for adaptive evolution.

What is Natural? Natural means "belonging to the nature or essential constitution"; inborn: *natural ability*. Thus, if you say that it is *natural* for someone to act in a particular way or for something to happen in that way, you mean that it is reasonable in the circumstances. Natural behaviour is shared by all people or all animals of a particular type and has not been learned. Someone with a *natural* ability or skill was born with that ability and did not have to learn it.

To 'select' means "to choose in preference to another or others; to make a choice, to pick". Therefore, Selection is the action or fact of carefully choosing someone or something as being the best or most suitable. In my view, the term 'Selection' has been erroneously defined as "a process in which environmental or genetic influences determine which types of organism thrive better than others, regarded as a factor in evolution". Because 'Selection' implies an effort of will that requires intervention from "Consciousness" which does not belong to the Animal Kingdom. Consciousness is uniquely a human faculty: Plants have Life but no Sentience; Animals have Life as well as Sentience, but no Consciousness; Humans have Life, Sentience as well as Consciousness. In fact, Consciousness alone as the best distinguishing trait sets humans apart from animals in an incomparable class. In this sense, the phrase coined by Charles Darwin is self-contradictory. What is "natural" is choicelessly inherited; "selection" is acquired as one grows and learns to use the stated inherited faculties in a certain way. Learned behaviour is indispensable in the process of "civilising" the "natural" [what is essentially raw and wild in man and belongs to instinct i.e. thinking with the Body, *not* Brain furnished with Mind that is a cultural artefact unique to humans].

Looked at from this new standpoint it should be easy for any discerning reader to figure out why Charles Darwin had coined and used the term. He was struggling to rationalise his theory that was essentially irrational because it was based on speculation or conjecture or a patent notion that was grossly subjective—something Science abhors. Darwin's desperation comes alive when he uses the phrase "survival of the fittest" in Chapter Four of On the Origin of Species to describe the process of "natural selection". But he did not coin the phrase. It was borrowed from the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, who had first talked about survival of the fittest in his Principles of Sociology. Thus what his phrase 'Natural Selection" could not explain he pressed into service the borrowed expression "Survival of the Fittest" to do so-and the two together worked wonders to the point of gaining widespread acceptance. However, if Scientists have accepted Darwinism as rational i.e. objectively true, it is the science community's courtesy offered in defence of an earnest family member!

Former President of the Indian Republic, Gyani Zail Singh, was chief guest for a function where Evolution was the key subject of discussion and debate. His presidential remarks on the stodgy sermons of the Evolutionists unnerved everyone to the point of rendering them speechless. His polite query had the power of a hydrogen bomb that the rational minds had not expected from someone who was a mere "Gyani" [someone highly learned in Sikh scriptures rather than educated in Science]. He quizzed, "If as you all say so forcefully that we humans have travelled up the ladder from horses and monkeys and guerrillas why are these fellows still around?"

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Pursuing such a curious line of argument that I have done so far, I might have created the impression that I am against Science, and in favour of Religion. Hardly! I am an obstinate believer in HOLISM and consciously ensure through periodic self-critique that my Thoughts, Words, and Deeds are properly aligned and remain so in order to obviate all kinds of distortions in perception and maintain their wholesomeness in terms of balanced and conjoined use of the two different cerebral functions of my brain's left and right hemispheres. To put it simply, it means that I constantly endeavour to emotionalise my thoughts and rationalise my emotions so that Reason [Left Brain Faculty] works in tandem with Emotion [Right Brain Faculty]-not against each other, as in the case of Religionists and Scientists-to holisticise my Thoughts, Words, and Deeds. The most beautiful word for this process and the resulting product is SAHJ given by Guru Nanak Dev. It means 'unconditioned spontaneity' that does away with all kinds of intention, intrigue, complicity, subterfuge, collusion, and what have you, because in doing so, the Mind has secured its release from the Five Inner Foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride. If you see the initial letters of these quintuplets in the given sequence in reverse, it reads PAGAL, which is Hindi/Punjabi/Urdu word for MAD. Needless to say that only someone truly MAD would indulge in malpractices that eventually harm Humanity's ecumenopolitan interests but yet create the inebriate illusion of gigantic personal gain and historic victory in one-upmanship over seven-billion+ fellow beings.

The inference of this note is that when the Religionist/Theologian makes an exclusive use of Emotion to uphold 'Subjectivity' he blinds his Faith and unwittingly turns it into Fanaticism [which is a dangerous game because fanaticism consists in doubling up your pace when you have forgotten the goal], and when, on the contrary, the Scientist strains Reason to the hilt to achieve perfect 'Objectivity' he ends up dehumanising his life's entire venture because objects are non-living commodities [including scientific instruments and apparatuses]. Ironically, these lifeless contrivances are formidable weapons to kill millions of lives in a single stroke! However, if both sides, in spite of the lurid light that throws on the chronic disease of *Science versus Religion*, still insist on

holding their forts in the never-ending War of Words that frequently turns violent and claims innocent lives, I would call it a problem of cut-throat 'Self-Righteousness'. Oddly enough, a 'self-righteous' fellow is confident of his own righteousness, especially when he is smugly moralistic and intolerant of the opinions and behaviour of others.

It should now be clear that while Creationism as a credo of Religion is an unchanging belief, Science with insistence on Evolutionism is hardly better off. Therefore, the conflict is not between Religion and Science. It is between Emotion and Reason. To my understanding, and as experimentally shown by the American Nobel Laureate Neurosurgeon Rogers Sperry, both these traits are human: Faith belongs to the Right Hemisphere of the Brain ruled by Emotion while Science belongs to the Left Hemisphere ruled by Reason. It is also scientific to know that Heart situated on the left side of the chest is controlled by the Right Hemisphere of the Brain [Emotion]. The age-old belief that Heart is very different from the Head stands ridiculously exposed because Heart is a pump for blood; the real heart lies in the Right Hemisphere of the Brain [Head] ruled by Emotion. The hackneyed phrase "qualities of Head and Heart" both belong indisputably to the Brain-it is another matter though that this misconception for want of scientific discovery has produced and continues to produce mountains of romantic poetry in all languages of the world. This thus is one exclusive area in which "Ignorance is actually Bliss!"

Furthermore, my method of *de-Acronymisation* [I have constructed an entire dictionary using this method and published it with my other seminal thoughts and musings under the title "WORDS"] shows that F-A-I-T-H has its Footing in Antecedents in Intuition that Truth Houses. Dictionary defines Intuition as "direct perception of truth, fact, etc., independent of any reasoning process; it furnishes immediate apprehension". For me, Faith is the spiritual blood that connects the human soul with God. According to Buckminster Fuller, the most brilliant human ever born, Faith is much better than Belief. Belief is when someone else does the thinking. He goes on to say "Love is Metaphysical Gravity". The point is that Theologists may be steeped in Faith but Scientists are not free from it either. And they are victims of

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Love, too. Apart from falling in love with humans they are passionately in love with their own pet notions, views, beliefs, hypotheses, theories, and what have you—a sure pointer of their brand of Faith.

Be that as it may, in my considered opinion, both Scientists and the Religionists are shooting arrows at each other in the dark dungeon of ignorance. How can either say with absolute certainty about the origin of the universe and/or the validity of Creationism or Evolutionism when neither was there when all this began millions of years ago? However, there are Scientists who (providentially) did not let their hearts die for want of blood sucked up by excessive dehumanising that Science causes. Sample this one. "Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science," Einstein wrote to a little girl who asked him whether Scientists pray, "becomes convinced that some spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man." "The notion that science and spirituality are somehow mutually exclusive," Carl Sagan seconded, "does a disservice to both." And yet the oppression of Religious doctrine over Scientific thought has persisted for centuries, from Galileo to some of today's most celebrated minds. And, if I may add, it is the mutually mind-marauding malice and malaise that continues to ail the human mind, involving both Scientists and Theologians in uncharitable kung fu.

What I am giving now comes from Science, and deserves to be heeded by Scientists of all genres for the sake of Humanity—if for nothing else than softening the edge of their arrogance that results from their "Know-All" stance. This is malevolently matched by the Theologians' insane declaration that "Religion begins where Science ends"—how would anyone who has never studied Science could pronounce such a puerile judgement?

Scientists themselves confess that "We have discovered a very small fraction of the endless universe. The percentage is unknown, but all the stars, planets and galaxies that can be seen today make up just 4% of the universe. The remaining 96% is the dark energy which is invisible. Dark energy is unknown to any laws of astrophysics and it is claimed that the dark energy is responsible for the expansion of the universe. Since the dark energy is invisible, forget about the 96% of the universe. Now, comes the remaining visible part. We know that we
have discovered more than we have explored. We have discovered the galaxies which are billions of light years far, with our radio telescopes; space telescopes especially. The Hubble Space Telescope (HST) played an important role in reaching deeper and deeper into the unknown, unexplored universe, which begs the question: How far can we see? The strange answer, which ends up as a paradox, is: Time, *not* Space, is what limits our view of the universe. Beyond a certain distance, light has not had *Time* to reach us as yet since the genesis of the universe.

"Although our view of the universe is limited, our imaginations are not. Astronomers have indirect evidence that the universe of galaxies extends far beyond the region we can see. But no one knows if the whole universe is infinitely large i.e. large beyond limit. There is decisive limit to the flight of imagination—however fantastic flyer it may be." [Source: Internet]

What is the farthest point in Outer Space that the Hubble Space Telescope can see? The conjecture rather than the straight convincing answer is: The farthest that Hubble has seen so far is about 10-15 billion light-years away. The farthest area thus looked at is called the Hubble Deep Field. Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope have found the farthest star ever observed named MACS J1149+2223 Lensed Star 1. It is a mere bright dot 9 billion light-years away. Forget thanking their lucky stars: This discovery required the fortuitous alignment of a massive galactic cluster. The cluster warped the starlight, bending it toward Earth while magnifying the star 2,000 times. In 1912, Vesto Slipher discovered that light from remote galaxies was red-shifted, which was later interpreted as galaxies receding from the Earth. In 1922, Alexander Friedmann used Einstein field equations to provide theoretical *evidence* that the *universe* is *expanding*. [Source: Internet]

Interestingly, Guru Nanak has gone farther than the Scientists' latest astronomical finding, which I hold to be conjectural rather than real because nobody can verify it. At any rate, the numerical value that emerges from umpteen tedious calculations turn out to be inconceivable, and have to be anyhow believed, if at all, on FAITH rather than Empirical Evidence and Laboratory Measurements that Scientists so stubbornly always insist to do! In the Guru's case, however, the concern is not limited to the quantifiable physical size of the Universe. He brings into the uncertain area of unnecessary centuries-old debate several qualities that are essentially immeasurable—and make Humanity what it is and aspires to do better with every passing century while suspended precariously between Animality and Spirituality.

The following verse from Guru Nanak's *Japuji* shows how the desperation in seeking the extent of the Universe, and, in the case of Theology, as also of God] ends in smoke. The two lines highlighted in BOLD allude to what in the terminology of Science is the "Expanding Universe". An additional point that ought to be noted by all and sundry is the Guru's Revelation that God and Universe are ONE, just as all things and creatures created by Him are ONE—underscoring the fact that somehow always eludes the Scientists that Cause-Maker, The First Cause, and its myriad Effects belong inseparably to the same Truth that is God's Primary Attribute.

PAURI-TWENTYFOUR

There is no limit to God's unique virtues Nor any to their human reckoning Beyond all measure is His vast creation And endless is His act of giving No limit to the spectacles that He stirs And infinite are the melodies that He conjures No limit to the secrets that His mind bears No limit to the creation of unreachable spheres Beyond could (are those who've vexed to) reckon But no success has ever been achieved by anyone The more certain we are, the greater He has become Great is the Lord God. exalted His station Still higher than the most high is His Holy Name He who must ever venture to know his greatness Has to be as great as He is, His stature to assess He alone knows His greatness, and He Himself can aver By His glance of grace, Nanak, He does His blessings shower [*Japuji*: English rendering in poetry by this writer]

I have thought up an additional verse to underscore my grasp and gumption of the problem involving both Science and Religion.

Those self-centred men who crazily sought God's extent Miserably failed, one after another; wailed, and went However, the lesser mortals reckoned them to be great Though their arrogant enquiry into Divinity made no dent

* * *

I am reproducing one hymn of Guru Nanak in which he shows why it is not possible to reckon God's stature and His countless virtues.

One and all without exception call Thee incredibly great on hearsay However, only he who has seen Thee could tell Thy stature immense Even reckoning doesn't avail, for Thou from description remain far away Those who succeed in knowing get absorbed in Thy quintessence O my awesome Lord, Thou are unfathomable As an ocean of excellences that is ineffable Nobody knows the infinite grandeur of Thy divine field All meditators put their heads together to attempt Thy measure Hard work of theologians, ponderers, and teachers did no answer yield All the Truth, all the penances, and the world's virtues entire All the Siddhas' joint powers and other beings' spiritual endowments Without Thy blessings nobody has ever had any great attainments The flow of potentialities that come from Thy grace can't be suppressed As such the helpless speaker is incapable of doing anything—unblessed Thy stores are stocked with Thy praises, power and pelf He who is lucky to receive Thy gifts gets a fulfilled self Nanak, [so endowed, his gifts of virtues relishes] When the Lord with Truth his being embellishes [Asa Mahala-1: Guru Nanak's hymn, rendered into English verse by this writer]

* * *





 50° years ago I started to view everything that I wanted know and/ or clarify on receiving stimulus from the study of the works of world's great thinkers, philosophers, god-men, artists, writers, critics, teachers, scientists, et al, vis-à-vis my own ongoing observation and examination of the subject concerned in terms of its empirical evidence available during workaday existence. In the larger perspective of the scheme of things, the intention was to figure how Religion [My Being] and Science [My Becoming] are different and how these seemingly incompatible disciplines could be merged to make my interests, my searches, and my discoveries Holistic. That half-acentury-old exercise has not only grown from strength to strength but also impelled me to consciously expand its scope to encompass many diverse problems to which I have since been successfully applying the lessons thus learnt.

While preparing a write-up on the subject of "Evolution" for this book, I came across in the raw, reference material frequent use of the term "Environment" which instantly took me back to the beginning of my learning approach as a teacher of architecture. Once mentally there at the source, I found my desire and drive enormously renewed, so much so that I briskly wrote the following article on Heredity, Environment, and Circumstance, which I am sharing with you in the fond hope that its serious read may empower and equip you to study the contents of my book with interest and benefit.

HEREDITY is the sum of all biological processes by which particular characteristics are transmitted from parents to their offspring, entailing the constancy of a species from generation to generation and the variation among individuals within a species. Heredity encompasses the genetic traits in an unalterable package that Nature delivers to you at birth. It cannot be altered; only studiously managed to adapt to the changing conditions of your growth and development as an individual human person. In computer parlance, each baby comes into the world with a new brain that carries pre-programmed master plan for its entire life which we, for want of a better word, call destiny. As it unfolds there are spasms of delight as in sexual orgasm or rude shocks of pain and despair. Psychologically, everyone without exception tries their best to avoid pain and look for pleasure anyhow bereft of the primary knowledge that life in the mortal world is furnished with two opposite colours: Black [Pain, Disillusion, and Despair] and White [Pleasure, Enchantment, and Hope]. The popular patent view of life that happiness can be permanent is universal, though fundamentally untrue. Guru Nanak gives the simplest possible diagnosis of the malefic malaise and offers its spiritually pragmatic treatment. According to him, Pain and everything attendant upon and accompanying it is caused by the sufferer's forgetfulness of God. I call it psycho-emotional dementia which is like retinal detachment of the Soul that blinds it to the existence of the Lord who despite His omnipresence cannot be seen by the suffering individual. That is why the Guru says that Pain is medicine; Pleasure is disease.

Nobody can [or need to] remember the Creator in the heady thrill of partying and feasting in the mortal world in which evanescent joys and thrills create an illusion of permanence. This is the magical play of Maya—God's unmatched theatrics that have divine power of creating make-believe world of durable desires, aspirations, hopes, and fleeting fulfilments. In such a scenario it is suffering that inflicts a painful reminder on his psyche so that Man gone astray would compulsorily halt to reflect what had gone wrong and how to find his bearings to regain foothold on the 'sands of time'.

Architecturally speaking, Guru Nanak uses the most effective telltale terms in connection with this all-important subject: *Manmukh* and Gurmukh. I, therefore, look upon this historic pair in terms of orientation which is one of the key criteria in Building Design for taking the best advantage the sun offers to the inmates during the changing seasons throughout the year. I thus interpret Manmukh to be a person whose consciousness is oriented towards the Mind [Mann] and Gurmukh as one who has its orientation towards the Spiritual Preceptor [Guru]. In other words, Mind, in the nightly darkness of ignorance, identifies its needs with those of the Body and, therefore, wanders life after life on the searing sands of ambition, sore-footed, with utmost dissatisfaction that borders on disillusionment. Manmukh then desperately plans intrigues and subterfuges to anyhow find happiness-knowing not that what his mind so fiercely craves lies within himself, and can never be had from the outside world that is peopled with commodities which though lifeless have tragic allurement—so formidable as to mislead even the saints and sages of which Hindu Mythology, richest in the world-as purest creation of human imagination-gives umpteen examples for humankind's psychospiritual education and emotional amelioration. That such be-all and end-all lessons can never be had from any human being is Guru Nanak's unique contribution to the resolution of the human predicament. He has made Shabda [Sacred Word received through Revelation] the Guru [Spiritual Preceptor] thus freeing the Mind from priests' trickery and psychological conspiracies to invariably gain personal advantage by misleading Humankind into widespread misery.

ENVIRONMENT embodies the sum total of all that surrounds us, constituting the whole physical, chemical, and biological systems surrounding Man and other organisms along with various factors such as soil, air, water, light, temperature, and natural forces influencing them. These are called a-biotic factors, besides which there are biotic factors that include all forms of life like plants, animals, microorganisms etc. All the creatures, things, and forces continuously interact with all the conditions surrounding them and constantly endeavour to adapt themselves to their Environment. In Architecture, architects are accustomed to talking of two types of Environment: Natural Environment and Built [i.e. Human or Manmade] Environment. Man and Environment are inseparable and have symbiotic relationship with each other. All aspects of Man's life are affected by Environment. That is why social and cultural activities around the world are so very different from one another. The people inhabiting the hills have lifestyles different from those living in the plains. Similarly, people around the world differ in their food habits, clothing styles, festivals, customs, etc.

The constituents of Environment are Physical [atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere], Biological [producers, consumers, decomposers] and Social. Human settlements, roads, farmlands, dams, and many other things have all developed as Social factors. All these components are made by Man, and included in Cultural Environment. Erving Goffman especially stresses the deeply social nature of the individual environment. Interestingly, while Natural Environment affects Man's life in a subtle way that is by its very nature and scope 'spiritual', Environment made by himself impacts his being and lifestyle radically. However, the raw material that comes from Geography exists at the bottom of the visible terrain exists. I have defined 'Geography' as the Architecture of Earth's Crust wrought by Mother Nature with her unique tools of Forces through the millennia.

I am convinced that it is Geography which shapes a staggering variety of cultural artefacts, philosophies, lifestyles, attitudes, ad outlooks. For example, the Indian Geography with its characteristic sub-tropical climate lets us Indians stay outdoors for most part of the year with the result that we have created an essentially Forest Culture which has through the millennia inculcated in us profound love for Mother Nature. In the West, the Geography attended by an inhospitable climate had kept the people out there in compulsive confinement freedom from which required huge and frequent human intervention with the result that they eventually developed Science and Technology, producing incredibly diverse artefacts, contrivances, devices, commodities, and what have you. Having been so brought up by Mother Nature [with step-motherly treatment] their patent attitude is steeped in Materiality as against our Spiritual mindset, which means, respectively, a compulsive stance that is against nature and the one that makes living with Nature mandatory. This unsettling contrast is encapsulated in the contrasting proverbs of the West and the East:

They say "To kill two birds with one stone". We say "To accomplish two tasks with one plan".

It should now be obvious that we humans, regardless of where we are stationed on the globe, need both Materiality [Food for the Body] and Spirituality [Food for the Soul]. Materiality is developed outside the Body. Spirituality is harnessed inside the Body. In both cases, Mind that is an intermediary between the two [i. e. Body and Soul] cannot accomplish either of the two primary tasks with Wrong Orientation. Guru Nanak serves on a platter Creative Mysticism to all peoples inhabiting the globe to enable them to solve their multifarious problems with minimal human intervention for altering the Natural Environment so that ecological balance is not disturbed to harm Humankind's interests. As discussed under 'HEREDITY', the Guru does it by suggesting the Right Orientation that creates *Gurmukhs* [Guru-Facing] as against the Wrong Orientation which gives birth to *Manmukhs* [Mind-Facing].

CIRCUMSTANCE is the condition in which something happens. It is the Environment for Action. Obviously, when the Environment is inhospitable, Action cannot be smooth and favourable to the Actor. Circumstance comes from the Latin Language meaning the conditions around something. As a condition, fact, or event accompanying, conditioning, or determining another, a Circumstance is an essential or inevitable concomitant. In this sense, CIRCUMSTANCE is the best empirical evidence that Time and Space exist as a Continuum underscoring Albert Einstein's proclamation that Time is the Fourth Dimension of Space. To put it in another way, I would say that Environment provides the Space, and Circumstance the Time so that Heredity as the sole Player plays the game of a certain segment of Life to Man's optimal advantage. In this sense, Time-Space Continuum is nothing but a compatible, happy marriage of Circumstance and Environment that provides the most favourable conditions for success of Action in terms of its contemplated outcome.

As I have explained before, Mind's wayward forays into the *Sahara* of Ambition in which Lust forms shifting sand dunes creating mirages, it cannot be weaned from evanescent illusory joys to retrace it footsteps

towards the Path of Righteousness without help and sustenance from Creative Mysticism. Therefore, when I look at Adaptive Evolution and relate it to Man's adventures into the Realm of Truth I cannot remain unconvinced that any method other than the one that Guru Nanak has shown and demonstrated can ever come handy to find my own bearings in psycho-emotional ground constantly shaken by lustquakes of unbridled desire. If Adaptive Evolution refers to evolutionary changes that are adaptive to the given environment—changes that increase survivorship or reproduction by addressing some specific challenge or opportunity presented by the Environment—*Gurbani* offers what I call Adaptive Resolution called *Bhaana Manna* [abiding in God's will (*Reza*) by leading life dictated by His edict-fiat [*Hukm*].

Whereas Adaptive Evolution is produced by Natural Selection, in the case of Adaptive Resolution it becomes a conscious choice between abandoning what is transient and illusory and that which is eternal and true. In achieving the latter aim, all that I have to do is to *religiously* follow the triune formula of Guru Nanak's Pragmatic Spirituality: *Kirat Karo* [Honest Livelihood] *Naam Japo* [God Remembrance]; and *Vand Chhako* [Charitable Sharing]. Where does the strength and stamina to undertake such an arduous task, which despite its deceptive simplicity warrants an all-out war on ignorance and inertia with unfailing resoluteness and unremitting perseverance, come from? It is supplied by constant vigil that is necessary to ensure that, firstly, Thoughts, Words, and Deeds remain perfectly aligned and, secondly, to firmly tell me that I ought to hold my Mind [as Consciousness] above the torpor of ceremonial piety that habitually sticks to the Body in order to ensure its perfect hygiene and proper upkeep.

What should I do; and How to do it? I ought to regularly indulge in psycho-spiritual workouts and make sincerest endeavour at conjoining my Consciousness [*Surt*] with the Sacred Word [*Shabda*]. This method incredibly simple to understand, though the most formidable to practise, is both Scientific and Religious because it presses into service the two diametrically opposed cerebral functions, respectively, of Brain's Left Hemisphere [that summons up an effort of human will from the domain of Reason] and its Right Hemisphere [that supplies energy from the

stocks of Emotion] to fashion *Holism* into the contemplated shape and size. My ever-widening and ever-deepening Creativity in diverse fields of human endeavour convinces me beyond all shadow of doubt that this unique prescription of Guru Nanak Dev has the self-renewing nuclear power of Pragmatic Spirituality that automatically jettisons the need for a human *Guru*. In the drunken stupor of having discovered Joyous Wonder [*Vismaad*] in versatile Creativity my sharpened awareness often negotiates, if only for a fleeting while, the elusive territory of Mysticism, from where mute suggestions echo to assure me that God is helping me to become a worthy receptacle of His grace. And thanks to Guru Nanak Dev's infinite mercy and active concern for the amelioration of the human condition worldwide that I too will soon be a tiny, yet enormously fortunate, beneficiary of divine grace.

* * *



Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the Sikh Faith, was born on 15 April 1469 CE at Rai Bhoe di Talwandi (present-day Nankana Sahib, now in Pakistan) near Lahore, the capital of the present western Punjab State. His parents were Kalyan Chand Das Bedi, and Mata Tripta. Mehta Kalu was his father's popularly shortened name. He was the local *Patwari*—village-level revenue official who kept record of land holdings/surveys, crops, and calculated land revenue of Talwandi.

His parents were both Hindus and belonged to the merchant caste according to the centuries-old caste system of Hinduism. He had one sister, Bebe Nanaki, who was five years older than him. After her marriage in 1475, she moved to Sultanpur Lodhi where her husband Jai Ram was in the Nawab's employment. Nanak was so attached to his sister that he followed her there. When he was 16 years, he started working under Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi as a storekeeper in *Modikhana* [Provisions Store]. Guru Nanak was married in 1487 CE to Bibi Sulakhni, daughter of Mula, a resident of Batala, in the present Punjab State's district of Gurdaspur. He sired two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Chand. Both were born during the decade of 1490 CE.

Guru Nanak was succeeded by Nine Gurus. This succession was ended by the Last and Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh who declared that *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* [Holy Book of the Sikh Faith] would be the Eternal Living *Guru* [Spiritual Preceptor and Enlightened Guide] after him. The founder's birth is celebrated worldwide every year as *Guru Nanak Gurpurab* on *Kartik Pooranmashi*, the full-moon day in the Indian month of *Katak [Kartik* in Hindi], October-November.

Guru Nanak's advent into the mortal world is a divine blessing because he came along with a burning desire to spread the Message of God to all peoples inhabiting the globe who were groping in the dark, and stumbling time and again in the midst of meaningless rituals and rites which the leaders of various religions misused to exploit teeming millions' innocence and gullibility. As Bhai Gurdas has aptly remarked Guru Nanak "rose to accomplish emancipation of the whole world". This is amply demonstrated in the long Missionary Journeys [Udasis] that the Guru embarked upon and travelled for over 25 years covering an incredible distance of 28,000 kilometres. He and his lifelong companion Bhai Mardana travelled largely on foot through uncharted terrains, dreaded forests, under frightfully inhospitable conditions and circumstances. He is the most travelled Prophet in world history who fulfilled to a large extent Lord God's Edict-Fiat [Hukm] to turn misguided Humankind towards Divinity. His longing was fuelled by Love [the Language of God] to mitigate epidemic suffering caused by ignorance, superstitions, and ethnic eccentricities, bolstered by ruthless exploitation by those who happened to be the high and mighty among the peoples of the world of his times.

> Karam dharma prabhi merai kiye Naam vadaayi siri karmaan diye

All deeds and faiths (doubtless) from my Lord emanate To the glory of Name, however, He's assigned higher state

Guru Nanak travelled far and wide and spread the message that he had received from Lord God in his Revelation, which was one of an uncompromising Monotheism grounded in One [Peerless] God who dwells in the hearts of all creatures and has Truth as His Primal Attribute. He established a unique holistic faith of spiritual, social, and political realities based on equality, love, justice, peace, and virtue. The Guru's Revelation [I had named it Creative Mysticism for my second PhD earned in 2000] is preserved in 974 *Shabads* [hymns] in the sacred scripture of the Sikh Faith, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* [SGGS]. The Sikh Bible contains, among many things, his major prayers such as *Japuji*, *Asa di Var*, and *Siddha-Gosht*. An inviolable tenet of the Sikh Faith is that the soul of Guru Nanak's sacrosanctity, divinity, and religious authority was infused into each of his nine successors when they were admitted to his Spiritual Ministry and ceremoniously installed as Gurus.

Guru Nanak though born in a devout Hindu family did not accept without questioning the centuries-old ideas and influences that had come down to it rooted deep in the Hindu tradition. He came into the world with an inquisitive mind, contemplative temperament, undiminished longing for Lord God, unconditional respect for various faiths, and an unremitting love for the entire humanity. Thus the Path of Righteousness that he showed to the peoples of the world as a divine gift of his Revelation was enthusiastically adopted by them, so much so that they did everything possible to disseminate far and wide its Pragmatic Spirituality, with love, care, reverence, and unconditional material and moral support.

With the new Spiritual Realities that Guru Nanak's Revelation brought forth, the Hindu-Sikh unity went so far as to muster a psychospiritual revolution. Soon it became difficult to distinguish between the traditional and the modern in the extant religious outlook, conventions and customs of the Hindu community. This welcome change was not unnatural because when sense of kinship sinks deep down to the foundation of society, good will and camaraderie spring from it like artesian wells. Such an exultant sense of belonging so generated in the fifteenth century is not only still intact and healthy today but has also struck such deep roots that the machinations, intrigues, and subterfuges concocted by perverted minds such as 'polluticians' possess cannot extirpate it. Readers will know this self-renewing truth for themselves as they go through the contents of this book. As Guru Nanak had shown through his personal exemplary lifestyle, I have attempted to underscore the perennial significance of the need for Guru, Contemplation of the Holy Name [NAAM], Prayer, Non-Dualism, Service, Metaphysics of Karmas, and such other issues which

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any Hindu and Non-Sikh could easily comprehend, and apply to their case to lead a holistic life in the pursuit of salvation because it is commonplace in the IT Era to hear these topics discussed across the globe in both the print and electronic media.

In the light of Guru Nanak's Revelation, if all World Religions have their Genesis in Lord God, it is *irreligious* to create inter-faith controversy and psycho-social tension claiming that *my* faith, *not* yours, contains the Light of Truth; only mine is real, but yours is an illusion, and imperfect, and so forth. Guru Nanak had the unique distinction of accepting every religion as valid in its own right because each faith is illumined by the Beauty of Divine Splendour. Therefore, each faith is capable of guiding its followers on the Path of Righteousness. According to his Revelation, therefore, the Guru spelled the divine message in simple language and practical terms.

Guru Nanak proclaimed God to be Self-created from His own divine essence and thus He is an indivisible Whole:

"Eko dharmu drirhai sachu koy Gurmati poora jugi jugi hoyi

He who resolutely makes a covenant with Truth Knows only one *Dharma* [Cosmic Moral Clime] By divine instruction realises that God in eternal youth Is the same and complete, everywhere, unchanging all the time

In other words, you are free to choose your faith but it is valid only when your creed and credo dwell in Truth because that is the Primal Attribute of God: The Lord *actually* exists [not as a figment of imagination as in Mythology], is born from His own Essence and, therefore, beyond change, life, and death as is known to we mortals. Treading the Path of Divine Enlightenment, Guru Nanak never converted anyone to the Sikh Faith. Though Bhai Mardana was the First Sikh outside the Guru's household, he remained a Muslim all his life. He was only shown how to be a complete and wholesome Muslim. The Guru had declared: "It is difficult to be called a Muslim because being one in the true sense is an uphill task requiring as it does unflinching loyalty to Truth during workaday existence throughout the devout's life!"

His true *Dharma* is not the one that a man claims. It is the one that has made his heart its home and transformed him into an icon of the very tenets of his faith as are discernible in his thoughts, words, and deeds. To be worthy of such a faith in its fruitful fullness, the devout ought to unremittingly engage in spiritual endeavour by a daring denial of conventional rites and rituals in order to lead a life of love, sacrifice, service, and *NAAM*-remembrance as human offering to Lord God.

Guru Nanak has expanded the idea and how it could be developed to full blossom in his unusual method thus:

Let continence be the furnace, and patience the goldsmith Intellect the anvil and knowledge the hammer God's fear the bellows, austerity's-heat the fire Fill the vessel of devotion with the Holy Name's nectar In such a sacred mint forge then the Sacred Word Those who by His glance are so favour'd Are in such hallowed task blissfully absorb'd Only heirs to His grace, Nanak, get this unique award

The Guru makes it further clear in his divine assertion:

"Nanak leikkhai ik gal hor haumain jhakhna jhaakh"

O Nanak, if God-realisation or understanding of the 'self' Were human beings' goal, it is worthwhile, perfectly so Otherwise, everything else is trash [of power and pelf] Because such achievement only bloats the seeker's ego

Since Lord God is an inexhaustible Treasure-trove of Truth, Love, and Bliss, his devotees are themselves partakers of these divine endowments which spring from the depths of their awakened being like artesian wells. God being in absolute freedom, fearless, and free from enmity, it goes without saying that those who worship Him imbibe these virtues in their everyday life. Moreover, since God has no form, colour, outline, gender, all biases, and prejudices concerning these things disappear from the religious [which is not at all sectarian] mind. This makes the NAAM-chanter a psycho-social revolutionary who voluntarily identifies his life and its purpose with the weak and underprivileged. Moreover, as his divinely-ordained job, he protects them, fights for their rights, and challenges the powers-that-be for their unjust, unfair, and highhanded treatment of the weaker sections of society. He sees in everyone the image of God whose love makes him self-sufficient to the point of serving the entire humankind without running out of psycho-spiritual wherewithal, with self-abnegation and social service become moral aspects of his blessed persona.

Guru Nanak declares:

Siru Nanak lokaan paav hai Balihari jaaon jete tere naav hain Nanak's head lies under people's feet; hence He is sacrifice, because all Names of God Strike his heart and soul as divine presence

Next stage of spiritual attainment is one of deep meditation, undisturbed by thoughts of any kind whatsoever because here the soul has reached its home where it beholds Lord God head-on. The Guru describes this solemn state as in the following terms: Ghat ghat antara lukaaya ghati ghati joti sithaayi Bajar kapaat mukte gurmati nirbhai taarhi laayi

Lord God dwells unseen in every heart In every heart He has installed His Light The Fearless constantly guards the tough gate That opens only by Guru-illumined intellect

Guru Nanak disposes off the unnecessary controversy that the educated-illiterate frequently create and sustain to stay in business concerning Lord God's stature and human helplessness in measuring it. He is forthright in stressing this inviolable truth as noted below.

> Suni vadda aakhai sabhu koyei Kevadu vadda deettha hoyei Keemati paayei na kahiya jaayei Kehnei waalei terei rahei samaayei

Everyone says on hearsay that God is great But how great He is can be known only when beheld If those who providentially acquire that exalted state Before declaring 'How great" in divine essence meld

There have been awesome geniuses in diverse fields in all parts of the world through the ages whose lifelong exercise in measuring God's stature ended as an exercise in futility. To my mind, the problem is simple. Man's appearance on Planet Earth is relatively recent compared to the genesis of the cosmos. Man being the only known creature blessed with 'life, sentience, and consciousness' has the urge to decipher the secrets of creation with matching ability to do so with the tools and talents that he has developed. But he fails to appreciate that in the abject absence of equipment that he may deploy to accomplish the impossible task, he has not so far succeeded in inventing one. Why? Because he begins with a hypothesis or theory or myth or preconceived idea borne of his limited knowledge of what he sees in the Phenomenal World—and, at best, lands with a conjecture that is as good as another human being's. And it is hardly of any consequence if the Big Bang theoretically occurred about 13.7 billion years ago as the Scientists agree and assert—would it really matter if *I* as an ordinary mortal said, "No. It had occurred 10 billion years ago?" Either conjecture cannot be proven in favour of one patent hypothesis or against it.

Guru Nanak has stated this curious case with a divine flourish and finality of experience [not experiment] that we cannot ignore saving it is not scientific. What he is emphasising is too subtle for the rational mind to even suspect, much less comprehend. He is talking of the ultimate tool 'consciousness' that we humans use to figure out what is what. In the point under discussion, it is this consciousness that must somehow rise high enough to access the Realm of Truth-God's Primal Attribute. However, ironically enough, when the seeker does succeed in elevating it to that incredibly exalted level his consciousness [tool of exploration, instrument of measurement, wherewithal to know, method, process, strategy, and much else] gets instantly absorbed in Divine Essence [that encompasses Truth, Consciousness, Bliss] with the duality of the seeker and sought giving way to only 'seeking' in which to know by seeing, measuring, and the urge for recognising by the Five Senses totally disappears. In other words, I must stress, with all the psycho-spiritual force at my command, that to know God is to become 'Him'!

In sharp contradistinction to the popular belief prevalent worldwide that Politics must not mingle with Religion, Guru Nanak Dev presented a global vision of a higher order of civilisation with his model fashioned from his Revelation in which Service of the teeming millions rather than Rule [by the exercise of political power] over helpless-hopeless-hapless humanity became the directive principle. He founded the Sikh Faith based on his Revelation [not a rehashing of existing religions as misguided scholars would have us to believe] as an ideal alternative of holistic living encompassing the Hindu quartet *Dharma, Artha, Kama*, hailing the life of a householder in which *Moksha* was possible to achieve. He prescribed the now world-famous three-pronged formula: *Kirat Karo, Vand Chhako*, and *Naam Japo* that warrants an unswerving enactment of solemn commitment during workaday existence. Guru Nanak Dev brought about a bloodless revolution in which the paupers rose to be princes overnight—and Maharaja Ranjit Singh demonstrated how the State could be politically administered by using the dictates of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that is the socio-political and psycho-spiritual Constitution of the Sikh Faith.

The Holy Book, as noted before, was eventually declared by the Last and Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh as the *Guru Eternal* of the Sikhs. It upholds principles of Equality, Justice, Liberty, and Merit in a heterogeneous society composed of many different languages, cultural identities, religious beliefs, and diverse traditions. This was amply and convincingly demonstrated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh during his six-decade-long rule in Punjab. Upholding the sacrosanctity of Humility as the Cardinal Principle of the Sikh Faith, as enjoined by Guru Nanak, the Sikh Monarch did not do anything in his own name. He even struck coins in Guru's Name and called the Sikh reign *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* [Government of Purified Souls].

Guru Nanak Dev offered a unique form of Monotheism which is uncompromising, self-sufficient, and holistic, so much so that the Sikhs' Holy Book begins with Numeral "1", and expands to set forth the *Nirguna* [Formless Transcendence] and *Sarguna* [Multiform Immanence] attributes of G-O-D [as Generator, Operator, Destroyer] revealed to him by the Lord Himself in what is called the *Mool Mantra* [Seed Incantation]. Since it is revelatory description of the Divine Being, it is wrong to call it "Concept of God" as all scholars big and small tend to do. A concept is a 'mental construct'—a creation of the mind—from which Guru Nanak Dev is studiously trying to wean the Sikhs' consciousness. He has called all humans driven by the mind's maverick machinations "Manmukh" [Mind-Oriented] so that they henceforth, guided by Shabda [Revealed Word], become "Gurmukh" who would look up to the Guru, the divine preceptor, for all kinds of guidance—individual, family, social, political, moral, spiritual to lead a wholesome life consummated in Holistic Humanism. The significance and magnificence of Guru Nanak Dev's unique Paighaam [Message] as Paighambar [Messenger of God] was captured by Allama Iqbal [Shā'ir-i-Mashriq or Poet of the East] in his poem titled "Nanak".

I am quoting two couplets from it in my poetic rendering of them in English as follows:

Sham'a-i-Haq se jo munawwar ho woh yeh mehfil na thi Baarish-i-Rehmat hooyi lekin zameen qaabil na thi

This wasn't the assembly that would by Truth's Lamp be lit Though grace had in torrents rained but the earth was unfit

> Phir utthi aakhir sada tauheed ki Punjab se Hind ko ik mard-i-kaamil ne jagaaya khwaab se

At last from Punjab arose again the Voice of Monotheism A Complete Man awakened India from her Somnambulism

A novel contribution of Guru Nanak Dev was the revolutionary declaration that renunciation is not at all necessary for God-realisation. Much to the contrary, a householder's path is the rich resource from which an earnest seeker ought to manifest life's many-splendouredness. The discerning Guru promptly figured out that those desirous of Godrealisation regarded the responsibilities of family life as something inferior and an obstacle in the way of their ill-conceived destination. This was entirely the result of wrong education by those self-styled Gurus [actually 'con men'] who exploited the gullibility of the masses to do brisk business and to stay in position of social control. They propagated with thunderous success the silly notion that this world is a dark dungeon of pain and disillusionment in which whoever gets caught has no chance of liberation. They thus insisted that spiritual benediction required the performance of austerities and so-called meditation in splendid isolation. Guru Nanak Dev made bold to declare this centuries-old malaise as fundamentally wrong and morally corrupt. To him such an approach smacked of utter selfishness [although not of a lower grade] because it gave the mistaken seekers entrapped by con men the liberty to focus entirely on securing their own welfare [in the pursuit of elusive Salvation or '*Mukti*'] by shutting their eyes on a course of action which would lead to societal weal as a whole.

Guru Nanak's Revelation offered to a chronically sick Indian society such psycho-spiritual exhortations as warranted 'involvement' in rather than 'escape' from workaday existence. His prescription was

To remain pure in an ambience of moral pollution is the right method of renunciation

Just as lotus in water doesn't get wet and on the wild duck too water makes no impression Saith Nanak: Word-Consciousness aboard the Name ferries the seeker across worldly ocean





In the year 1985 I decided to arrange a seminar on Sikh Architecture, a subject which was far neglected by the academicians and professional architects. I contacted so many prominent persons from the area. Dr SS Bhatti, and his father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti, an architect of distinguished standing, could understand me quickly and rightly. This gave me strength and support, thus the seminar was a success. Dr Bhatti's participation and contribution in the seminar was outstanding. His professional competence as an architect, and his father's influence of Gurbani on his mind, worked together to bring out the present miracle. With this confluence, his artistic vision achieves new dimensions, the dimension of a poet and lover of poetry, music, dance, and above all, an architect, all merging into one with the distinct perception of an artist in totality. I believe all art, if it is art, is mystical in nature, but in Dr Bhatti art and mystical experience are supplementing each other to find rare one in him.

Our interest in each other started growing in mutual discussions on Gurbani and Sikh Architecture; one right in mystical experience, and the other seemingly an art of drawing and creating physical structures for protecting and beautifying life. In the process, the idea of mystical experience being creative became clearly perceptible. Dr Bhatti emerged as an artist with fully refined sensibility, competent to handle the most subtle and slippery subject, while using his professional tools. He combines in him subtle and the concrete at the same time. Mystical experience and architecture, seemingly of art, merge in one person. This gave birth to the subject of his second PhD, an enviable position. Thus the subject of his research itself unfolds before him. He has to deal with a creative element in mystical experience which is an inherent fact but unattended so far by the researchers of the subject of mysticism. The researchers on the subject, and even the known modern mystics, have treated it as an area wherein creativity is not only unexpected but also undesirable. Dr Bhatti, with the strength of Gurbani, has proved that if it is mysticism it has to be creative, regenerating and refashioning the person and the spirit in him.

This kind of experience though inexpressible yet has to be expressed. There the role of language comes in. To have a comprehensive study of the arrangement and designs of such a poetic expression the role of architecture again comes in. Here the scope of architecture also gets wider perspective with deeper meaning. Apart from designing layouts it now encompasses the design of the structures of words and stanzas. To study mystical poetry with architectural tools is a rare gift to the study of both poetry and visual arts.

In this dissertation, Dr Bhatti has created architectural beauty of mystical experience, and mystical experience out of architecture. So, the sacred experience is central to both. Thus, it is an excellent but unconventional study of Gurbani from a new angle for generations of research scholars in this area. With this my dream of diversifying the area of Sikh Studies gets a shape.

This book is a fine piece of research on the study of human experience revealed through poetry and architecture, a rare combination. No doubt the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, is very proud of this product, but those for whom it is produced surely feel indebted to Dr Bhatti for exploring the depth of aesthetics in art and culture. I feel extremely proud in presenting this volume to the community of academicians, awakened souls, and readers in general. At the same time I pray for many more such valuable gifts from the pen of Dr Bhatti. I wish this book to be part of every library in home or institution. It will add to the existing set of knowledge.

Chandigarh, June 2005

Dr Darshan Singh

Former Chairman, Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies Panjab University, Chandigarh



y interest in Gurbani was inherited from my father, late Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti (1905-1993), who loving nurtured it until he breathed his last-by a constant hammering-in of the inalienable validity and veracity of the Divine Law by apt quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib (referred subsequently in this study as SGGS). However, my real initiation into the Sikh Faith came after the death of my mother when I was barely 10 years of age. My farsighted father prepared me mentally and emotionally for the great saga of life that awaited us with all its tears and tortures whereby I would be smelted into a person of a quite different mettle over the coming years. At his persuasion, I learnt by heart Guru Tegh Bahadar's magnificent hymn [Pritam jan(i) leh(u) man mahi... Sorath Mahalla 9, SGGS, p. 634] which has few parallels that portray the human predicament in such poignant language with a haunting purposiveness. Indeed, my father used to stress ad infinitum the plain truth that the Ninth Guru's Gurbani is full of vairag [an unbroken spell of renunciatory longing] that impels the human soul into the sole quest of The Ultimate, Unchanging, Reality, I remember reciting this soulful shabad umpteen times until the message pierced my sensibility, and I emerged as a believer of sorts-outside the ritualistic and ceremonious vestiges of Religion-from the quagmire of life's vicissitudes.

By virtue of the initiation, which I received from my father in my younger days, my faith in Guru Nanak's Bani has been growing from strength to strength. This has further been reinforced by my study of comparative religion over the past forty years. Since I have been engaged in creative work as a professional trained in Architecture, I have had the opportunity to relate my knowledge and experience to the intrinsic creativity of Gurbani in general and Guru Nanak's Bani in particular. This study is thus the outcome of an assiduous application of the tools and techniques of Architecture I have developed as a teacher, theorist, researcher, and practitioner. Added to the architectural tool-kit is the material I have drawn from various other disciplines such as poetry, painting, sculpture, photography, philosophy, music... in which I have firsthand experience too. So quipped, I have faced the human predicament as an Act of Creation which has activised my psycho-somatic energy into such thoughts, words, and deeds as may contribute, in however small a measure, *actually* to the amelioration of the human condition. How? By a resounding appeal to the validity and veracity of the inner life as enjoined upon the Sikh (from the Sanskrit, Shishya) by Guru Nanak's Bani, especially his Japuji—when he is confronted with its life-sustaining Spiritual Architecture, as I have endeavoured to reveal through this study.

According to my knowledge and experience, Architecture is the most comprehensive activity so far devised, encompassing as it does all the four major fields of human endeavour: Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. When in use, Architecture is the most prized of human civilisation's cultural possessions. When in ruins, Architecture is Archaeology: the tell-tale narrative of civilisations long past-even forgotten. As is now common knowledge, Humanities covers history, sociology, economics, political science, etc.; Art deals with performing (dance, drama, music, etc.), literary (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, etc.), and visual (architecture, painting, sculpture, etc.) arts; Science encompasses physics, chemistry, botany, natural and biological sciences; and Technology (including engineering, hi-tech products and process) treats everything in physical terms that has made modern life what it is. Perhaps "Holism", a term coined by General Smuts, who was contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, alone conveys the many splendoured beauty and bounty of Architecture. Holism is the theory that the fundamental principle of the universe is the creation of wholes i.e., complete and self-contained systems from the atom and cell, by evolution to the most complex forms of life and mind.

The four elements, or building-blocks, of Architecture: Space, Structure, Form, and Time, are so universal that their use in the vocabulary of other disciplines as noted above becomes indispensable. That's why Architecture can never go out of fashion. We are now talking of Architecture of computers: the incredible gadgets that have increased the speed of material progress a million-fold! And, metaphorically, we always talk of Architect of the nation, Architect of one's destiny etc.

My professional involvement in Creativity does not permit me to believe in Specialisation, as a choice calling. My credo is Comprehensivity. Specialisation, with its characteristics emphasis on knowing more and more about less and less, ends up by distorting, in my view, the personality and perception of the specialist. Comprehensivity, much to the contrary, I believe, encourages knowing more and more about more and more, thereby broadening the outlook of the generalist, and results in the enrichment of his life. Comprehensivity, in other words, is the recovery of the Renaissance Man (i.e., universal talent) from the archaeological ruins of a lifestyle that once nurtured itself on the inexhaustible creative, adaptive, and reflective powers of the human genius. It was that amazing creative power which proceeded to capture, despite its slow-paced strategy, the beauty and bounty of Nature in Man's enduring works of Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology.

To my information, such a method of approach has not been applied before to the study of Gurbani—which, for the uninitiated, seems to have little in common with Architecture. But having discovered Creativity as common ground between the two, I have tried to view Gurbani as an epoch-making work of (Spiritual) Architecture with my distinct professional tools.

I must acknowledge my deep gratitude to Dr Darshan Singh, former Professor and Chairman, Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, for inspiring and encouraging, through wise counsel—this project. It is to be hoped that this study will provoke fresh thinking on the subject, and motivate scholars of other backgrounds to see Guru Nanak's Bani in a new light.

Chandigarh, 15 May 2005

-Dr SS Bhatti



This study is quite simple a testament of why and how an architect sees the same things in the world so very differently from all those who pursue only one calling and/or have their perceptions conditioned by the regimen of their chosen specialisations. An architect *actually* uses the expertise and experience produced by the four major fields of human endeavour: Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. No other single discipline known to mankind, to my information, ever does so with the same resilience of spirit nurtured by an ongoing inter-disciplinary approach to problems of Creativity in different media. Therefore, using my professional tools and techniques, as an architect, I have been able to delineate the architectonics of Guru Nanak's Japuji. I dare say this is a much wider and deeper treatment of the subject—as may be readily seen from the outcome of this dissertation. Architecture is the crucible of an unending creativity from which human civilisations emerge one after the other in refreshing new forms through the course of history.

Objectives of this Study

Major objectives of the present dissertation are to study/establish that:

- 1. Revelation is a valid means of (direct) knowing,
- 2. Religion is the Architecture of total human consciousness, integrating Soul, Mind, and Body in the individual as an active agent of Pragmatic Spirituality which he develops *creatively* through everyday work,

- 3. The Revealed Word (*Gurbani*) is enlarged and extended as Life evolves through a multi-dimensional historical process,
- 4. Deeds grounded in *Dharma* make a human being a fit and deserving person to receive God's grace for his spiritual ascent,
- 5. Creative Mysticism, as propounded by Guru Nanak in Japuji, holisticises the Quintessence of Religious (i.e., non-dogmatic, forever progressional) Life, as, while exalting the mundane to the sublime during workaday existence, it impels the seeker-doer to be a creative, not merely a (re-)productive, person—thereby enabling him to acquire a view and way of life free from the arcane intricacies and disabling encumbrances of ritualistic, sectarian, communal, and doctrinaire propriety, and
- 6. Guru Nanak's Bani is neither Mythology nor Metaphysics, nor the Muse, not even Mysticism or Creativity divorced from life. It is Revealed Word packaged in Creative Mysticism, A Universal-Timeless Formula—unprecedented in sacred literature—as easy of understanding as of application, for humankind's social amelioration, ethical purgation, aesthetic advancement, and spiritual salvation.

Scope of Work

This thesis is confined mainly to the study of Guru Nanak's Japuji, with occasional allusions to his other Bani, with a view to delineating the architectonics of the Revealed World. It is an attempt at presenting a holistic point of view. It should hopefully stimulate fresh thinking on the subject, Religion, which is an inseverable appendage to the human psyche.

Methodology

As the name implies, "Creativity Mysticism: A study of Guru Nanak's Bani, with special reference to Japuji", is the first research of its kind on a subject of cosmopolitan interest and farreaching significance. At any rate, no architect, to my information, has so far dealt with such a subject. The text of this research is all my own writing. The only exception that I have made is this Material

on key-topics such as Mysticism, Mythology, Revelation, etc., which form the ground-work for this study, has been entirely drawn from such authoritative sources as the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Wherever applicable, these sources have been quoted in extenso in the dissertation. The intention is to create an objective basis, for examining Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, vis-à-vis the key-topics in their widelyaccepted representations and interpretations. Juxtaposing such authoritative material with my own views on the stated topics, I have attempted to point out through discursive analysis how Guru Nanak's contribution in these areas of abiding human interest substantially, often fundamentally, differs from the established notions about them. This point is crucial in my dissertation which, though not entirely without a hypothesis, does not rest on it for introducing an unusual point of view. More than insist in proving an irrefutable conclusion, however, my thesis seeks to set forth a method of approach that throws new light on religion in general and Guru Nanak's Bani in particular. My own brand of pragmatic i.e., humanism or practicalism—developed on empirical observation and tested on the anvil of practical necessitythat makes practical consequences the test of truth, boils down to just this aphorism: Wrong cannot be justified, and Right need not be justified!

In a nutshell, the methodology used in this study seeks to disentangle the confusion of opinions and counter-opinions on an esoteric subject until the inference begins to assume the crystal-clear character of an axiom, a self-evident truth. It may be conceded that Guru Nanak himself sought to retrieve Truth to its pristine glory by cleansing it of centuries-old dirt systematically deposited by persistent priestcraft, mind-boggling Metaphysics, Mythology divorced from the process of history, and the scholastic gobbledygook of umpteen generations of commentators and self-styled path-finders. Thanks to his magnificent Revelation, Guru Nanak transmuted Religion into a commonsensical, innocent and simple view and way of life for the entire populace inhabiting the Planet Earth. In this special sense, the Guru's Timeless-Universal Divinity is amply amenable to the method of approach I have applied in this study. From the foregoing exposition, it should be clear that reference from books would have served a very limited purpose of this dissertation. Just the same, a large number of books have been listed in the Bibliography. These are the ones I have been reading over several years of contemplative seriousness, and have eventually helped me as preparatory material for the present work. I have, however, not quoted from these books. The ones I have actually used as reference works are: GS Talib's *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (in English Translation) Vol. One, published by Punjabi University, Patiala; GS Randhawa's *Japuji* in English translation; and Madanjit Kaur's'' *Guru Nanak and His Teachings*—both published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

The Japuji in Gurumukhi script, along with its transliteration, has been reproduced in the Appendix. Making it part of the text was found to be too cumbersome owing to its length. However, shorter pieces from this, and Guru Nanak's other Bani, have been incorporated in the body of the dissertation.

This work is a fresh look at Revealed Word, as largely embodied in Guru Nanak's Japuji. It sets forth how an architect-with training, expertise, and experience in the art of visualisation (coupled with on-ground actualisation)-views such an esoteric subject as Religion. My first job, therefore, was to drastically cut down in the text the deployment of the term "Religion" which, owing to its misuse and abuse over the centuries, evokes revulsion (rather than reverence) in the minds of those who profess to have their database in the so-called scientific learning. But more than a mere replacement for "Religion", I have coined the term "Creative Mysticism" as a framework for the study of Guru Nanak's Bani. It is intended to encompass, among other things, the chief function of Religion as a transmuting force for orienting (even by de-orienting and/or re-orienting) the seeker's mind to the Indivisible (if Ineffable) Unity of Godhead so that all his mundane activities become divinised-and (self-exalted) to sublimity during workaday existence.

To my knowledge and practical experience, all Creativity, at its highest, is Mystic; and all Mysticism, at its deepest, is Creative. But Creativity pursued as a vocation ends up as sheer artistry—an aesthetic intrigue that succeeds in minting (unsavoury) money. By the same token, Mysticism pursued as a salvation ends up as esoteric exclusivism—a veritable weapon that succeeds in baffling the (mass) mind. However, in the case of Guru Nanak's Bani, all Creativity is expression (in artistic creation) which exalts the human soul to the level of credulous romancing (with the Creator) that can be summed up as a single word, "Aah!": an exclamation of creative joy. Also, all Mysticism is thanks-giving (in aesthetic appreciation) which elevates the human soul to the realm of eternal wonder (at the Creator) that too can be summed up as a single word, "Waah!": an exclamation of Divine madness (*vismaad*). My coinage is thus intended to distinguish Guru Nanak's "Creative Mysticism" from all genres of both Creativity and Mysticism, practised separately.

In my coinage, "Creative Mysticism", Mysticism is Experience (of the Divine), and creativity is its artistic Expression. One without the other is incomplete. Together they give birth to what I call: Pragmatic Spirituality.

The Guru's pre-eminent contribution lies in that, by virtue of his unprecedented Creativity, he brings his marvellous Mysticism to the doorstep of the common man—offered on a platter of Divine Grace, for which he thanks (and takes no credit whatsoever) His Monarch-Maker: *Wah-e-Guru* (Hail The Guru!). This is the sole reason for my insistence that Guru Nanak's Bani is neither mythology, not Metaphysics, not even the Muse. It is Creative Mysticism: a Godoriented soul-consciousness (*Surat*), always in the ascendant (*Charhdi kala*), forever in Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression—a long stillness of prayer for Divine Grace built around an unbroken, joyous thanksgiving through life's thick and thin, in an imperturbable acquiescence of all mortal longings!

Following this line of thought, the reader may perhaps find my work to be worthy of his serious interest—and, eventually, of some benefit which could hopefully holisticise his own life!

Chandigarh, 15 May 2005

—Dr SS Bhatti



AN ARCHITECT'S APPROACH TO RELIGION

Which the tools and methods of Architecture, I am able to see Religion in a new light: as an Edifice of Faith, upraised of the same elements—Space, Structure, Form, and Time—which go into the making of Architecture as the art and science of building design. In fact, this is what I discovered after a long and sustained study of this esoteric subject: Creativity as common ground between Religion and Architecture. Since such an approach, to my information, has never been applied before to the study of matters religious, it might sound somewhat far-fetched. But, as I will attempt to show, such really is *not* the case. Seeing Religion as Architecture, like I myself do, the reader would perhaps fall in love with the idea of living exuberantly in this Edifice of Faith rather than regard it as one of life's many lacklustre obligations. In this chapter, the conceptual groundwork for my dissertation has been delineated accordingly.

Conceptual Groundwork

Life on the planet Earth—comprising God, nature, and man—is an ever-deepening cosmic mystery which thrives on its own inexhaustible potential for creative self-expression. To unravel this mystery, humankind has been engaged in a never-ending search with the aid of numerous tools broadly classified under five major fields of human endeavour: Religion, the Humanities, Science, Art, and Technology. Prophets, seers, sages, philosophers, scientists, artists, and technologists have through the course of human history, recorded their experiences of life using it as a means to unravel the mysteries that it embodies. Over the centuries, some of the truths revealed to the prophets have become indoctrinated in the form of Religion as institutionalised belief. Religion is, indeed, the most powerful single belief which has held sway on the "Collective Unconscious" (analytic psychologist Carl Jung's term) in all parts of the world. So deep-rooted has been this influence on the psyche of man that all other fields of human endeavour have often been exploited to serve Religion one way or other. Yet the irony remains that—rather than enable the common man to become self-reliant in terms of thought, word, and deed—Religion has actually mystified (by engaging him in meaningless rituals, rites, and myths) the mystery of life that t promised to unravel, thereby making his life unbearable, if not totally unliveable.

Religion has three major components: ritual, myth, and philosophy. Ritual (an incomprehensible code of religious ceremonies) is a specific, observable kind of behaviour based upon established or traditional rules. Known in all societies and dependent on belief systems, rituals may be viewed as symbolic acts based upon arbitrary rules similar to those of language.

Myth and Mythology are two terms used in the study of religion and culture the subjects of which are accounts about Gods or superhuman beings and extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is altogether different from ordinary human experience. Myth, a collective term used for one kind of symbolic communication, specifically indicates one basic form of religious symbolism, as distinguished from symbolic behaviour (such as cult and ritual) and symbolic places and objects (such as temples and icons). Mythology is a term that is used for the study of myth and also for the body of myths in a particular religious tradition (*EB**, Vol. 12, p. 793).

Philosophy is an academic discipline that revolves round man's endeavour to reflect deeply in a rational, methodical, and systematic

^{*}EB, abbreviation of Encyclopaedia Britannica, used as a major reference in this study
way upon those aspects of experience that are of greatest concern to the human community.

Despite its enormous potential, not yet fully and properly exploited, Religion has serious limitations which create an unbridgeable schism between its preaching and practice. A vast majority of people mistake rituals for Religion because of their ignorance. The performance of rituals thus becomes a repetitive and mechanical affair, devoid of meaning that could enrich common man's life. In its extreme meaningless form, Religion as rituals ends up being the "blind faith" of the literate masses. By contrast, those who are literate or semi-literate with a reasonable capacity for comprehending tales and fables-are often content with what myths have to offer. Considered in terms of man's vertical growth vis-à-vis the imperatives of Religion, though, Mythology though is a step higher than rituals. At the next rung of the ladder lies the third major component of Religion: philosophy. As may be seen from the arduous nature of man's ascent, only a small minority of people reach this level because it requires a rigorous intellectual discipline. And yet philosophy, as an academic discipline, rarely takes man beyond the realm of speculative insight. For the most part, it ends up as a jugglery of words with a pedantic show of mental powers often indulged in as a pastime that gives to its practitioners a fraudulent sense of achievement divorced from the demands of workaday existence.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it should be easy to appreciate why mysticism should have come into being at all. Mysticism seeks to negotiate "the transcendent realm" which lies far beyond the reach of "that dear delight of understanding" provided by philosophy. Mysticism is an approach denoting in general a spiritual quest for hidden truth or wisdom the goal of which is union with the divine or the sacred (the transcendent realm). A form of living in depth, mysticism indicates that man, a meeting ground of various levels of reality, is more than onedimensional and that he may progress to his spiritual goal by various stages, usually designated as purgation, purification, illumination, and unification. Mysticism lifts the mind above the torpor of dailiness, thereby imparting an irrefutable authenticity of personal experience to man's commonplace activities. And by a process of transformation unique to mysticism, man is often enabled to penetrate immanence to have a glimpse (however imperfectly) of "the transcendent realm" (*EB*, Vol. 12, p. 786).

Unfortunately, my experience substantiates the fact that the many forms of Mysticism, which have been proposed and practised for the amelioration of the human condition, have had little use for the man in the street. For one thing, the language of communication employed by various prophets in their own brands of Mysticism is so esoteric as to be unintelligible to the common man. For another, the subject that Mysticism generally deals with has always been out of the reach of common sense. When practised, as dictated by the prophets, Mysticism has tended to alienate the ordinary practitioner from the beauty and bounty of workaday existence. This is because the practice of Mysticism tends to be at variance with everyday empirical observations, so much so that even the conscientious practitioner actually begins to look askance at the validity and usefulness of Mysticism as a means of redemption. It may be conceded that, with the fast-growing complexity of everyday life, there is an emergent need for finding out if there is any way out of the perplexing predicament of the contemporary situation.

During the course of my study of this problem for over three decades, I have stumbled upon the discovery that mysticism alone could be the true "saviour" or "redeemer" of the common man. However, this brand of Mysticism has got to be one that works in everyday life, round the clock. Therefore, it must be pragmatic insofar as the satisfaction of reason-the chief idiosyncrasy of the human mind-is concerned. But it must also work in another way: To enable every human being as a unique creative individual to pursue whatever he ought to pursue in deference for the voice of the inner person so that he may come to fuller blossom in his very lifetime. Through several of my experiments done during my search for a special brand of Mysticism, I have coined the term "Pragmatic Spirituality" for what may most appropriately be called "Creative Mysticism". This unique master formula-which works during workaday existence at all levels, in all places, at all times-has enabled me to develop my latent Creativity in different areas of artistic self-expression. My success gives me a strong feeling that it will be a

worthwhile subject to explore more deeply and more comprehensively. I propose to embark upon such an "Odyssey into Mind" through: *"A Study of Guru Nanak's Bani with Special Reference to Japuji"* because that is where the Fountainhead of "Creative Mysticism" precisely lies.

The practice of "Creative Mysticism", such as I have discovered in Guru Nanak's Bani, notably in his Japuji, has led me to realize that man is an indivisible organic whole comprising Soul, Mind, Body—with a unique potential for Creativity that can encompass nearly everything from the most mundane to the most sublime. This is so because of Guru Nanak's Bani (Revealed Word) insists on informing every human being as an *individual* about the intrinsic creative powers which are his life's only authentic resource, and then on motivating him to help himself in developing those powers in the form of Creativity most appropriate to his own native ability.

Guru Nanak's "Creative Mysticism" may, indeed, be used by anyone engaged in any field of human endeavour, at all times, much in the manner of playway learning whereby the process of perennial discipleship—untarnished by the dross of caste, creed colour, sex, or ethnicity—is set into motion, to encompass life as much as a holistic expression as a self-convincing measure of man's metaphysical quest, his ethical conduct, his aesthetic appreciation, and his logical interpretation of the inner and outer realities which embody the unextinguished subatomic spark of Divinity even in the midst of violent winds of change.

Religion: The Other Elements

Apart from Mysticism, the other three elements, which are invariably associated with all religions of the world, are (1) Mythology (and Myth), (2) Metaphysics, and (3) Poetry (the Muse). For the purpose of the present study, it is necessary to examine these disciplines in some detail.

Myth and Mythology (EB, Vol. 12, pp. 793-803)

Something untrue can be referred to as a "mere fable", and fictitious, and stories likes those of Aesop, and ancient Greek storyteller, are called fables. But genuine myths, on the contrary, are not presented as fictitious or untrue. Myth is thus a collective term used for one

kind of symbolic communication and specifically indicates one basic form of religious symbolism, as distinguished from behaviour (cult, ritual) and symbolic places or objects (such as temples or icons). Myths (in the plural) are specific accounts concerning gods or superhuman beings and extraordinary events or circumstances in the time that is altogether different from that of ordinary human experience. As with all religious symbolization, there is no attempt to prove that these unusual, transcendent, or divine are "possible", or otherwise to justify them. For this reason, every myth presents itself as authoritative and always as an accounts of facts, no matter how completely different they may be from the ordinary world. The original Greek term for myth (mythos) denotes "word" in the sense of a decisive, final pronouncement. It differs from logos, the word whose validity or truth can be argued and demonstrated. Because myths present extraordinary events without trying to justify them, people have sometimes assumed that myths are simply unprovable and false stories and thus have made the word myth a synonym for fable. In the study of religion, however, the difference between myth and fable must be borne in mind.

The term mythology is used in two distinct ways. It is the study of Myth, but it also the body of myths given in a particular religious tradition.

Characteristic contents of Myths. Myths are accounts with an absolute authority that is implied rather than stated; they relate events and states of affairs surpassing the ordinary human world, yet basic to that world; the time in which the related events take place is altogether different from the ordinary historical time of human experience (and in most cases unimaginably long ago); the actors in the narrative are usually gods or other extraordinary beings (such as animals, plants, the very first people, or specific great men who changed human condition). Many other forms of literature share in one or more of the features of this definition of myth without becoming mythical.

Functions of Myth and Mythology

Explanatory and narrative. The first function of myths that strikes the outside observer of tradition is that of explanation. Natural, social, cultural, and biological facts are explained by myth. This is not to say,

however, that myths becomes identical with etiological (Greek *aitia*, description or assignment of causes) tales. A North American Indian (Abnaki) [Wabanaki] myth, for example, explains the origin of corn: a lonesome man meets a beautiful woman with long, light hair; she tells him in detail how to make a fire and drag her over the burned ground; as a result of these acts, he will see her silken hair (viz., of the cornstalk) appear and have corn seeds for his use. Henceforth, whenever the Indians see her hair, they know that she has not forgotten them. Obviously, a myth such as this one functions as an explanation, but, just as obviously, the narrative form distinguishes it from a straightforward answer to an intellectual question about causes. The function of explanation and the narrative form go together, and myths have thus been significant in many traditional systems of education.

Myths of Time and Eternity. The regularity of the heavenly bodies has made a great impression on people everywhere. The sky is the very image of transcendence, and the unmutable order in the course of sun, moon, and stars suggests a time that transcends man's. That "transcendent time" is eternity. Many myths and mythological images concern themselves with the relationship between eternity and time on earth. The number four for the number of world ages figures most prominently. Ancient Persia knew of a complete work age of 12,000 years, divided in four periods of 3,000 each, at the end of which Ormazd (the Wise Lord) would conquer Ahriman (the Lie). Similarly, the Book of Daniel (in the Old Testament) mentions four kingdomsof gold, silver, bronze, and a mixture of iron and clay, respectivelyafter which God will establish an everlasting kingdom. Four world ages, sometimes associated with metals, occur also in classical writers and in later speculations on history. Judaism developed the view of a 1,000-year period between the four world ages and the everlasting kingdom (hence the words millennium and millenarian). Although other numbers occur (three six, seven, 12, and 72), four is dominant. In ancient Mexico this world was held to be preceded by four other worlds. India, in both Hindu and Buddhist texts, has developed the most complex system of world ages and worlds that arise and come to an end. Here too the number four is important; e.g., the four ages (yugas) of decreasing length and increasing

evil. Many writing, often with large numbers that have been considered fantastic by humanistic scholars, reflect exact astronomical observations and calculations. Some mythologies—e.g., those of the Maya in Central America—have developed sophisticated views interrelating time and space. Mythological accounts of repetitions of worlds after their destruction occur not only in India but elsewhere, such as in Orphism (the system taught in the Orphic mysteries) and Stoic (pertaining to the Stoics, or their opinions) philosophy in ancient Greece.

Myth in Modern Society

Commonly accepted forms of Mythology in modern society, however, do not permeate all parts of that society or fulfil all needs. In all likelihood, no society has ever been perfectly homogeneous in its myths. In modern society a number of profound mythological needs are filled by myths borrowed from submerged or alien traditions. Modern society's neglect of cosmic symbolism (which typified all archaic tradition) has elicited a certain reaction and has led various "subcultures" to an interest in cosmic coherencies (such as astrology). The great scientific possibilities opened up by the 20th century have everything to do with the rise of a new literature, resembling myths, and often with an eschatological (the doctrine of the last or final things, as death, judgement, the state after death) tenet (e.g., science fiction).

Metaphysics (EB, Vol. 12, pp. 10-35)

Metaphysics is the philosophical study whose object is to determine the real nature of things—to determine the meaning, structure, and principles of whatever is insofar as it is. Although this study is popularly conceived as referring to anything excessively subtle and highly theoretical, and although it has been subjected to many criticisms, it is presented by metaphysicians as the most fundamental and most comprehensive of inquiries, inasmuch as it is concerned with realty as a whole.

There are at least three components in the metaphysical conception of reality. One characteristic is that reality is genuine as opposed to deceptive. The ultimate realities that the metaphysician seeks to know are precisely things as they are—simple, and not variegated, exempt from change, and therefore stable objects of knowledge. Plato's own assumption of this position perhaps reflects certain confusions about the knowability of things that change; one should not, however, on that ground exclude this aspect of the concept from metaphysical thought in general. Ultimate reality, whatever else it is, is genuine as opposed to sham. Second, it is original in contrast to derivative, selfdependent rather than dependent on the existence of something else. When Aristotle sought to inquire into the most real of all things, or when medieval philosophers attempted to establish the characteristics of what they called the *ens realissimum* ("the most real being"), or the original and perfect being, they were looking for something that, in contrast to the everyday things of this world, was truly self-contained and could accordingly be looked upon as self-caused.

The task of the Metaphysician. It should be obvious that, to establish his right of pronouncement on what is ultimately real in the sense analysed, the metaphysician has a tremendous amount to do. He must begin by giving colour to his claim that everyday ways of thinking will not suffice for a full and coherent description of what falls within experience, thus arguing that appearances are unrealalthough not therefore non-existent-because they are unstable and unintelligible. This involves a challenge to the final acceptability of such well-worn idea as time and space, thing and attribute, change and process. Second, granted that there are contradictions or incoherencies in the thought of common sense, the metaphysician must go on to maintain that they cannot be resolved by deserting common sense for science. He will not only deny that the concepts of science are in many respects different from those of everyday thought; to take one aspect only they are altogether more precisely and sharply defined. They permit the scientist to introduce into his descriptions a theoretical content that is lacking at the everyday level, and in so doing to unify and render intelligible aspects of the world that seem opaque when considered singly. The metaphysician will argue, however, that this desirable result is purchased at a certain price: by ignoring certain appearances altogether. The scientist, in this way of thinking, does not so much offer a truer description of the phenomena of which ordinary thought could make no sense; he merely gives a connected description of a selected set of phenomena. The world of the scientist, restricted as it is to what can be dealt with in quantitative terms, is a poor thing in comparison with the rich if untidy world of everyday life. Alternatively, the metaphysician must try to show that scientific concepts are like the concepts of common sense in being ultimately incoherent. The premises or presuppositions that the scientist accepts contain unclarities that cannot be resolved, although they are not so serious as to prevent his achieving results that are practically dependable.

Metaphysics is not an empirical science—the element of speculation it contains is too strong for that—but the metaphysician can no more ride rough-shod over facts than the scientist can. At the least he must explain away phenomena that seem to count against his thesis, or indicate how they might be explained away. Whether he explains or explains away, he needs to know what the main phenomena are.

Transcendental Argument. It is sometimes said that Metaphysics can make use of a form of argument that is neither deductive nor inductive but transcendental; a transcendental argument is supposed to proceed from a fact to its sole possible condition. The interest of these arguments as they may appear in philosophy—in the philosophy of Kant, for example-lies in the kinds of things that are taken as starting points; in Kant's case it was such things as the possibility of pure mathematical knowledge, the possibility of making objectivity true statements, the fact that there is a unitary system of time. Kant purported to prove a number of surprising propositions by the use of transcendental arguments; what he had to say under this head has attracted particular interest in recent years. In seems clear, however, that from the logical point of view no special significance attaches to this form of government. A transcendental argument is simply a form of deduction, with the special pattern: only if p then q; q is true; therefore, p is true. The interest of the argument, and its difficulty, reside not in the movement from premise to conclusion, which is absolutely routine, but in the setting up of a major premise. Kant tried

to commend his major premises (for example, in his arguments about causality and substance) by showing what would result if the protasis (i.e., p) did not hold. Though in this way he showed that a sufficient is also a necessary condition, he did not make clear why it should be taken as the sole such condition. There is an important gap in his reasoning here, as there is in other metaphysical writers.

Location of the Role of Science in Knowledge. The work of William James, a leader of the Pragmatic movement, was typical of many contemporary tendencies, one of which is the attempt to locate the role of science in knowledge and culture. He presumed that mental status could be identified independent of a commitment to the metaphysical status of the things known by them and that they could be correlated to the brain.

Each realm of the world is experience in terms of temporal standards of though natural to that realm; e.g., standards of mathematics are peculiar because of their ideal, changeless objects. These criteria are relationship in what is termed experience. This is a "double-barrelled" term—i.e., an experience of experienced things. The mind cannot be specified independent of the things. The mind cannot be specified independent of the things that appear to the mind, and things cannot be specified independent of their modes of appearing to the mind. Phenomena regarded abstractly as singular, or "pure", are neutral between mind and matter, which are different contexts of the very same pure experiences—contexts that comprise a single world.

The Existentialists. According to Martin Heidegger, a German thinker sometimes called an Existentialist, to rethink the problem of reality at its roots, it is necessary to rethink the fundamentally temporal, already-given structures of human involvement. Prejudice in the West, which construes reality, or being, on the basis of beings (i.e., being as the most general feature of beings), must be overturned, and the problem of the real, the "transcendent", must be though on a ground on which distinctions between immanent and transcendent and between perceptual and categorical have been reconstructed. The being of the world transcends any constitution of the meaning of the world and is a condition of experience. Thus, a sense is required of being not as an object but as the underlying condition for the reality of the being of all objects.

Heidegger wanted to propose a genuine phenomenology, a study that would presuppose nothing of the traditionally formulated distinctions such as subjective-objective or phenomenal-real. The transcendence of the world can be understood only as it appears, i.e., when encountered openly, things appear as appearing in part, as revealing and concealing themselves. If to the uneducated eye the sun appears to be smaller than it is, this can be corrected only by educating the person to interpret appearances—to calculate, for example, the speed and direction of light. The real is given in and through its appearances.

Poetry (the Muse)

In Greek mythology, there are nine goddesses of the liberal arts: the studies that make up a liberal education. In the Middle Ages, these were called the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and *quadrivium* (the four branches of mathematics: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). The nine Greek goddesses are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Zeus is the greatest of the national deities of Greek, son of Kronos (Saturn) and Rhea (the daughter of Uranus and Ge, wife and sister of Kronos). The nine goddesses of the liberal arts are: Calliope, of epic poetry; Clio, of history; Erato, of love poetry; Euterpe, of music and lyric poetry; Melpomene, of tragedy; Polyhumnia, of sacred lyrics; Terpsichore, of dancing; Thalia, of comedy; and Urania, of astronomy. Poetry is thus a very important Muse as, in its four different incarnations as goddess of the liberal arts, it deals with Poetry per se.

Interestingly, in Hindu mythology, Poetry is placed at number one among sixty-four fine arts—followed in descending order by: music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. The exclusive determinator of the stated order is the ability of the *Lalit Kala* (fine art) concerned to deal, most comprehensively and abstractly, with an amazing range of subjects which impinge upon human experience from the most mundane to the most sublime. Words, being the most plastic of all materials that can be readily fashioned into images, metaphors, shapes, etc., exalt poetry to the number-one position. Music, as a product of notes by vocal chords or by instruments, is relegated to the second position. For one thing, its components are not as pliable as those of Poetry. For another, it cannot match Poetry's facile capacity for expressing the abstract and the esoteric. When it comes to Painting, further constraints come into play and reduce its components' ability deploying point, line, plane, colour, texture, etc. to a lower level of effectiveness and eloquence especially in dealing with the abstract. The capacity of Sculpture, which is a physical, free-standing structure to be seen in the round, is considerably limited by a force of gravitation. Architecture, at number five, apart from being handicapped like Sculpture, most of necessity take care of a host of other aspects such as site, materials, building techniques, social relevance, economic viability, climatological imperative, earthquakes, mechanical services, and so forth—besides *actually* using the input from the fields of Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology.

Poetry is further distinguished by the fact that it is mnemonic: a device, e.g., verse, to help memory. It is not surprising that it should really be so. As a Muse, it is the daughter of the Greek Goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, mother of the nine muses. The word "mneme" means a memory-like capacity of living matter for after-effect of stimulation of the individual or an ancestor. If this weren't true, it is doubtful whether the four Vedas and other sacred literature of the Hindus could have been successfully transmitted by word of mouth, generation after generation of seers for many centuries, before they were committed to writing! This inherent strength, which is unique to the Muse, is what Poetry the Language of Prophecy. In other words, all Prophets are Poets: though the converse is not true. All Poets are not Prophets. At any rate, there is more to this queer subject than one suspects. Therefore, it may be helpful to deal with Poetry as one of the very fine forms of literary (not visual/plastic, or performing) arts, in some detail before the questions, that Guru Nanak's Bani is not Poetry (in the sense of literature), is examined.

Poetry (*EB*, Vol. 14, pp. 599-603) is vast subject, as old as history and older, present wherever religion is present, possibly—under some definitions—the primal and primary form of language themselves.

The French poet Paul Valéry said that prose was walking, poetry dancing. Indeed, the original two terms, *prosus* and *versus*, meant, respectively, "going straight forth" and "returning"; and the distinction does point up the tendency of poetry to incremental repetition, variation, and the treatment of many matters and different themes in a single recurrent form such as couplet or stanza.

Kinds of Poetic Form

There is, first, the obvious external form of rhymed, closed couplet in iambic pentameter (that is, five poetic "feet", each consisting of one stressed and one unstressed syllable, per line). There is, second, the obvious external form of a single sentence balanced in four grammatical units with and in counterpoint with the metrical form. There is, third, the conventional form belonging to the epitaph and reflecting back to antiquity; it is terse enough to be cut in stone and tight-lipped also, perhaps for other reason, such as the speaker's shame. There is, fourth, the fictional form belonging to the epitaph, according to which the dead man is supposed to be saying the words himself. There is, fifth, especially poignant in this instance, the real form behind or within the fictional one, for the reader is aware that in reality it is not the dead man speaking, nor are his feelings the only ones the reader is receiving, but that the comrades who were forced to execute him may themselves have made up these two lines with their incalculable complex and exquisite balance of scorn, awe, guilt, and consideration even to tenderness for the dead soldier. There is, sixth, the metaphorical form, with its many resonances ranging from the tragic through the pathetic to irony and apology: dying in battle is spoken of in language relating it to a social occasion in drawing room or court; coward's fear is implicitly represented as merely the timorousness and embarrassment one might feel about being introduced to a somewhat superior and majestic person, so that soldiers responsible for killing him are seen as sympathetically helping him through a difficult moment in the realm of manner. In addition, there is seventh, a linguistic or syntactical form, with at least a couple of tricks to it: the second clause, with its reminiscence of Latin construction, participates

in the meaning by conferring a Roman stoicism and archaic gravity on the saying; remembering that the soldiers in the poem had been British schoolboys not long before, the reader might hear the remote resonance of a whole lost world built upon Greek and Roman models; and the epithets, "blindfold and alone", while in literal acceptation they clearly refer to the coward, show a distinct tendency to waver over and apply mysteriously to Death as well, sitting there waiting "blindfold and alone". One might mention another form, the eighth, composed of the balance of sounds, from the obvious likeness in the rhyme down to subtleties and refinements beneath the ability of coarse analysis to discriminate. And even there one would not be quite at an end; an overall principle remains, the compression of what might have been epic or five-act tragedy into two lines, or the poet's precise election of a single instant to carry what the novelist, if he did his business properly, would have been hundreds of pages arriving at.

Poetry as a Mode of Thought: the Protean Encounter

Poetry, like, indeed, all Mythology, Metaphysics, etc., deals with an urgent questions a man has about his way in the world. He already knows the answer but it fails to satisfy him. So at great inconvenience, hardships, and even perils, he consults powerful and refractory spirit who tries to evade his question by turning into anything in the world. Then, when the spirit sees he cannot get free of the man, and only then, he answers the man's question, not simply with a commonplace but with the same commonplace the man had been dissatisfied before. Satisfied, or not, however, the man now obeys the advice given him.

A poet also has one great and simple question, simple though it may take many forms indeed. Geoffrey Chaucer put it as well as anyone could, and in three lines at that:

> What is this world? What asketh men to have? Now with his love, now in his colde grow, Alone, with-outen any companye.

("The Knights Tale", 1919-1921)

And a poet gets the simple answer he might expect, the one the world grudgingly gives to anyone who asks such a question. The world is this way, not that way, and you ask for more than you will be given, which the poet, being scarcely more fool than his fellowmen, knew already. But on the path from question to answer, hanging into the slippery disguiser and shape-shifter Proteus, he will see many marvels; he will follow the metamorphoses of things in the metamorphoses of their phrases, and he will be so elated and ecstatic in this realm of wonders that the voice in which he speaks these things, down even to the stupid, obvious, and commonplace answer, will be to his hearers a solace and a happiness in the midst of sorrows!

Alexander Pope's formula, "What oft was thought, but never so well express", sometimes considered as the epitome of a shallow and parochial decorum, is not in essence other than this of John Keats:---

I think Poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by Singularity it should strike the Reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts; and appear almost a Remembrance. (Letter to john Taylor, 1818)

In the present century, Robert Frost is strikingly in agreement:-

A word about recognition: In Literature it is our business to give people the thing that will make them say, "Oh yes I know what you mean." It is never to tell them something they don't know, but something they know and hadn't thought of saying. It must be something they recognize. (Letter to John Bartlett, in Modern Poetics, ed. James Scully, 1965)

The sorrowful contemplation of what is, consoles, in the end, and heals, but only after the contemplative process has been gone through and articulated in the detail of its change. When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past, I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste; Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, For precious friends hid in death's dateless night, And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe, And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight. Then can I grieve at grievances foregone, And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan, Which I new pay as if not paid before. But if the while I think on thee, dear friend, All losses are restor'd and sorrows end. (Shakespeare, Sonnet 30)

This poem, acknowledged to be a masterpiece by so many generations of readers, may stand as an epitome and emblem for the art (of poetry) altogether, about which it raise a question that must be put, although it cannot be satisfactorily and unequivocally answered. The question of whether poetry is a sacrament or a confidence game or both or neither. To reply firmly that poetry is not religion and must not promise what religion does is to preserve a useful distinction; nevertheless, religions of the world, if they have nothing else in common, seem to be based on collections of sacred poems. Nor, at the other extreme, can any guarantee that poetry is not a confidence game be found in the often-heard appeal to the poet's "sincerity". One will never know whether Shakespeare wept all over the page while writing the 30th sonnet, though one inclines to doubt it, nor would it be to his credit if he did, nor to the reader's that he should know it or care to know it.

...And yet the greatest poetry sings always, at the end, of transcendence; while seeing clearly and saying plainly the wickedness

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and terror and beauty of the world, it is at the same time humming to itself, so that one overhears rather than hears: All will be well.

Poetics. Since Gurbani (literally, utterance of the Guru, the Spiritual Preceptor or Soul's Guide) is entirely in Poetry, a brief discussion of that branch of criticism which relates to it: Poetics, should be in order. Poetry is almost impossible to define, but is formally (i.e., in form) recognisable and distinguishable from prose composition but its greater dependence on the line, which changes its appearance on the page. Another fundamental distinctive feature of poetry is the element of Music (i.e., the presence of rhythm, cadence) whereby it can be recited and/or sung. In its transfiguration from a literary art (Verse) to a performing art (Music), Poetry is enabled to heighten manifold its intrinsic power of expressing a whole gamut of emotions: romance, agony, ecstasy, loneliness, sombreness, etc.

"Poetics" is also the name of the influential treatise written in 335 BCE by Aristotle, Plato's most famous disciple. It is concerned with defining the making of poetry as an initiative art. Poetry, music, dancing, painting, and sculpture, for Aristotle as for Plato, had "imitation" (*mimesis*) as their common principle, and are distinguished according to the medium used for imitation (e.g., colour, the voice), the objects imitated, and the manner of imitation. The objects to be imitated are men in action. And Tragedy aims to imitate men who are better, while comedy aims to imitate those who are worse.

"Mimesis" is a basic theoretical principle in the creation of art. The word is Greek and means "imitation" (though in the sense of "representation" rather than of "copying"). Plato and Aristotle spoke of mimesis as the presentation of Nature. According to Plato, all artistic creation is a form of imitation! That which really exists (in the "world of ideas") is a type created by God. The concrete things Man perceives in his existence are shadowy representations of this ideal type. Therefore, the painter, the tragedian, and the musician are initiators of an imitation, three times removed from the Truth. Aristotle, speaking of Tragedy, stressed the point that it was an "imitation of action" that of a man falling from a higher to a lower estate. Shakespeare, in Hamlet's speech to actors, referred to the purpose of playing as being "... to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature." Thus, an Artist, by skilfully selecting and imaginatively presenting his material, may purposefully seeks to "imitate" the inexhaustible action of life.

In Book-I, the kinds of mimetic poetry are distinguished according to means, object, manner and effect of imitation. Gathering these elements into a definition of Tragedy as a whole, Aristotle reasons from it as from a principle to find the number, nature, relative importance, and proper construction of the parts of the Tragedy: plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle. Epic is treated in terms of its differences from Tragedy. Book II of the *Poetics*, on Comedy, is lost.

Poetic Diction is the lofty, elevated, and unfamiliar idiom, supposedly the prerogative of Poetry but not of prose. The earliest critical reference to Poetic Diction is Aristotle's sensible remark in the Poetics that it should be clear without being "mean". But subsequent generations of poets were more scrupulous in avoiding meanness than in cultivating clarity. Depending heavily on expression used by previous poets, they evolved in time a language sprinkled with such archaic terms as "eftsoons", "prithees", "ofts", and "eres". It was in this "inane phraseology" that Wordsworth rebelled against in the "preface" (1800 AD) to *Lyrical Ballads* in which he advocated a Poetry written in the "language really used by men". Subsequent critics, notably Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, felt that Wordsworth overstated the case, that his own best work contradicted his theory, and that some of his work written in "the language really used by men" did not achieve the level of Poetry.

Modern critics take the position that there is no diction peculiar to Poetry, though there may be diction peculiar to an individual poem. Thus, Shakespeare's sonnet "Not marble, nor the glided monuments", beginning with such images of stately dignity, continues with words evocative of public pomp and temporal power.

Be that as it may, I am convinced from my long indulgence in creative and criticism, that Wordsworth prepared the right ground for stating the case of Poetic Diction with artistic precision and elegance. And it seems to me that when "the language really used by men" comes in touch with Creative Mysticism, it is sanctified into Sacrament, with the Poet's heart as a receptacle of Divine Grace.

Poetic Imagery is the sensory and figurative language used in Poetry. The object or experience that the Poet is contemplating is usually perceived by him in relationship to some second object or event, person or thing, to which he directs attention. He may be thought to transfer from this image certain qualities, which are then perceived as attributes of the original object. The Poet's intention is to embellish, illuminate, emphasise, or renew by such transference the original character of that which he contemplates. The making or finding of the image is an activity by which the Poet invites the reader to establish certain relationships, which in turn involve value judgement. Images and symbols are, in one sense, the outcome of the Poet's impulse to perceive Unity in Diversity or to draw together a number of apparently unrelated experience or to communicate through their submerged or penumbral statements meanings that are beyond the resources of direct language. Images also differ in the depth or profundity or complexity of the meanings implied, as well as in their purpose and origin. And they derive additional force and vitality from their contextual relation to other images in the poem.

If the same image is used consistently throughout a poem, it may be appropriate to call it a symbol. It may be thought of also in terms of correspondences. The poet perceives a person, an event, an object, or a myth to embody a number of significances, to which he directs the reader's attention. Birds, beasts, and reptiles, the heavenly bodies, the natural elements, geometrical signs, sea and desert, forest and river, music and dance, Soul-Overself wedlock, pilgrimage, light and darkness, artefacts of many kinds—all are symbols often used in Poetry.

Certain metaphors and symbols, because they are used throughout world literature, are often called archetypal, which means the original pattern or model. Their continued vitality suggests that they correspond to profound and perennial aspects of the human situation. Among them are many Myths, such as the descent into the underworld, the slaying of the dragon, the rescue form the enchanted castle, Rama representing good and divinity, Ravana representing evil and villainy, flowers of all kinds, often symbolising womanhood or its virtues, drop losing itself in ocean, spark reuniting with flame, and so forth. The investigation of archetypes has brought both anthropology and psychology to the service of literary criticism.

In **Creative Mysticism**, the use of archetypes is extended manifold in profundity, variety, and richness by the Poet's exalted access to Divinity. Thus, Rama leaves his mythical role as an ideal king to be elevated to a stature of Godhood. It should be noted, though, that the intension of the divine Poet is not to draw upon this perennial repository of universal symbols in their *literal* sense. Rather it is to use the familiar word-pictures of Mythology to reveal the unfamiliar in the evolving human situation. Thus, though, the Body (form) in which he garbs the Soul (content) is uniquely his own, the latter remains universal. By such a sensitive Strategy, Creative Mysticism brings the esoteric within the reach of the soul-consciousness (*Surat*) of the unlettered masses.

Poetic Licence is the right assumed by Poets to alter or invert standard syntax or depart from common diction or pronunciation to comply with the metrical or tonal requirements of versification. As a general rule, Poetry has a carefully-controlled verbal structure. The metre of the poem, the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables, and the sounds and modulations of the words themselves all affect the subtle meanings and feeling that the Poet may be trying to express or evoke.

All Poets distort normal prose patterns for the sake of Form and, therefore, assume Poetic Licence. It is solely a matter of aesthetic sensibility and judgement as to whether the alterations enhance or detract from the total effect of the poem.

The term Poetic Licence is now often used in a humorous or pejorative sense to provide an excuse for careless or superficial versification, exposing the "poets" ability to handle his material. A vast majority of such "poets" barely manage to make their writing—in verse libre (free verse)—look like poetry on the printed page. But what they actually end up achieving is brutally-slaughtered prose!

Creative Mysticism, which enforces a strict self-discipline, never stands in need of assuming Poetic Licence. Because it is not at all trying to *impress* either by its erudition or esotericism, it lets go the faculties of the Agents in total surrender to allow the afflatus flow through the

Mind—uninterrupted. Creative Mysticism does not produce a poem by Inspiration. It brings forth a fully-developed child prodigy from the placental membranes of Revelation. The rigours of its inner code succeed in the fission of the nucleus of the Mind: the soul-consciousness (*Surat*)—and, in a Big Bang, expand it to the infinite frontiers of universal Freedom: a psycho-spiritual state of awesome detachment, in which no rules, literary or otherwise, exit except the Law of Divine Dispensation. In a fitful flash of self-realisation, it reveals by its own inner compulsion of the splendour of Truth i.e., Beauty in Poetry. Such Poetry is not a work of literature—a charming ensemble of merely lovely words. It is a Literature of Love garbed in Words of Grace, the Sacrament (the Sacred Food) for millions of Truth-Starved Souls.

DISCUSSION

The three disciplines of (1) **Mythology**, (2) **Metaphysics**, and (3) **Poetry**, set forth in their essential details in the foregoing pages, may now be discussed to see how Guru Nanak's Bani, with focus on Japuji, is none of these, either singly or in combination. It is quite simply an unpremeditated expression of the Divine Word that he received in his Revelation. Let us take them one by one.

Mythology

Guru Nanak proclaims his faith in an unequivocal and uncompromising way, beginning with the sacred formula (*Ik Oankar*)—making an assertion, never made in the history of world religions before, which leaves no doubt in one's mind as to the Guru's firsthand knowing by (having seen and) seeing, that God is One (his prefix of the digit "1" is unique in that we rarely question the numerals and their assigned values in Mathematics) and He alone is the first (and ultimate) cause keeping to Himself the primary functions of Generation, Operation, and Destruction (G-O-D) without any assistants, regents, or collaborators. In the exposition of God's attributes (which together constitute the palpableness of His Immanence) Guru Nanak neither alludes to any known Myth nor makes a new one to promote his faith. Having established God's Monarchy, he exhorts the earnest seeker to *japu*—and spells out what he must contemplate: *Adi sachu, Jugadi sachu, hai bhi sachu, Nanak ho si bhi sachu.* Thus, before he puts the seeker on the odyssey into his own inner life, as an inexhaustible source of spiritual adventure, the Guru advises the seeker to remember the Divine Datum of Truth which (by Guru's definition) is not subject to phenomenal change—and therefore evergreen, everyoung, everliving, everlasting, without beginning, without an end. Because it is beyond Time and Space: the two basic building blocks of Phenomena (i.e., countless universes). Just the same, the Guru points out that since all that exists is God's Own Creation, *this* world (unlike what other religions, notably Hinduism, hold to be false) is True, though in a Relative (not an Absolute) sense.

The upshot of this discourse is that Guru Nanak's Bani is an historically valid proclamation of a Faith which is a *living truth*, open to test and verification during workaday existence by anyone who has aligned his "thought, word, and deed", by contemplation of the Holy Name, into self-sustaining, socially-beneficent actions. Yet such a blessed seeker claims no credit for his good deeds, for humility is his self-satisfying ethico-spiritual reward. In other words, Guru Nanak emphasises the self-sufficiency of inner life which, when lived in humility and simplicity, becomes an integral part of the historical process whose aim is a slow but sure evolution of all creation, by God's Own Edict-Fiat, towards a higher, deeper, better, and fuller Life of Grace. Guru Nanak deals with facts that the common man encounters everyday in the ordinary world in which he lives—as a launching-pad for his spiritual flight into the Realm of Truth.

Beginning with *Ik Oankar*, running though all the 974 *Shabads* (verse-units) of Guru Nanak's Bani, one finds reiteration upon reiteration of God's Ineluctable Supremacy that is the *raison d' etre* of All Creation. For this reason, guru Nanak's Bani is *not* a Myth or a body of Myths that present(s) itself/themselves as authoritative and always as accounts of facts, no matter how completely different they may be from the ordinary world.

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Nor can one find any evidence of Myths of Time and Eternity in Guru Nanak's Bani. His assertion to this effect is that nobody, except God Himself, knows the beginning and end of Time. He regrets that even the term "countless" is not befitting, thereby pinpointing the limits of manmade language. TS Eliot *was right when he tersely observed that Mythology (as collective socio-cultural Literature) is the purest creation of the human imagination.* Guru Nanak is not exercising his imagination when he asserts that the Mythic Bull cannot support the Planet Earth because there is the Cosmic Void around and therefore it doesn't have anything as solid ground to rest upon. This no human imagination could ever capture—this is quite clearly the evidence of actual seeing of the immensity of interstellar/interplanetary space. At any rate, fully corroborates the Myth-exploding Truth revealed to Guru Nanak.

Metaphysics

The abject inadequacy of Metaphysics—as the philosophical study whose object is to determine the real nature of things-has been exposed by Guru Nanak in the very first pauri of Japuji: Sochai sochi na hovaee, je sochi lakh var... Since the real nature of things is first and last God's Own Attribute, it cannot be known by any means whatsoever except by the Guru's Grace, according to Guru Nanak. But such benefaction comes only to someone who has gone through the impossible ordeal of truthful lifestyle-twenty-four hours of everyday living for the whole span of his life. And for the life of an earnest seeker, Humility alone is the befitting receptacle of Divine Grace. Quite clearly, therefore, all other means, including the discipline of Metaphysics that relies chiefly on speculation i.e., ratiocinative cerebration divorced from empirical observation, are of no avail-though they do give the spurious seeker a fraudulent sense of achievement insofar as he does succeed in spelling out a line (even a school) of thought couched in jargon intelligible to but a privileged few. In this particular sense, the same is true of the scientific methods. As already observed under the topic Metaphysics, "The premises or presuppositions that the scientist accept contain unclarities that

cannot be resolved, although they are not so serious as to prevent his achieving results that are practically dependable."

It would be clear to any attentive reader of Guru Nanak's Bani that the Guru is not a Metaphysician because he never strays into speculation nor, like the scientist, he conjures up "premises and presuppositions" to argue his case, much less to prove his point. He uses a curious Logic that is demonstrable even to the common man. For example, he asserts that if the Qazi knew the Origin of the Universe, he would have mentioned that date in the Holy Koran. The same is true of the Pandit claiming authoritative knowledge of this puzzle. Guru Nanak is transmitting as directly and simply, as the limitations of language would permit him, the Truth as Revealed to him by God's Own Grace. The time-lag between Revelation and Transmission (as verbalised communication) is reduced to its utmost minimum by removing all speculation, arguments, and assumptions as well as story-telling that would allure the listeners away from the Truth by the mesmeric charm of a novel fiction. In this sense, it is wrong to insist that Guru Nanak's Bani has a philosophy to offer. It is Creative Mysticism, not Metaphysics in which, at best, one may be able to identify certain Tenets, the bedrock on which Guru Nanak's Pragmatic Spirituality is founded as Holistic Humanism that works for everyone, everywhere, all the time-with Mind and Matter subsumed in Phenomena and consummated in God's Solemn Sublimity spontaneously come to blossom within the human soul.

Poetry (the Muse)

Poetry is a metrical composition, in one of the many forms established by literary standards (and accepted as such), so that the resulting verse has that characteristic regulated succession of certain groups of syllables—long and short, stressed and unstressed. Prose, in sharp contradistinction, is ordinary spoken and written language with words in direct straightforward arrangement, and covers all writings not in verse. According to TS Eliot, hailed as father of modern poetry, *"whether a work is poetry must be decided by literary standards; whether it is great poetry must be decided by standards higher than the literary.*" From the foregoing analysis, it should be clear that the art of writing poems, or of versification, presupposes the presence in the writer of two things: craft and creativity. *Craft* is the skill that must be acquired over long period of assiduous application along with the study of prosody, diction, etc. *Creativity* cannot be learnt, but it can certainly be developed—provided there is enough imagination supported by cultivated perception. Thus, Poetry (the Muse), or for that matter, any of the fine arts covered under: literary, visual, and performing arts—requires premeditated effort whereby one picks up and defines the subject-matter of the poem, selects the metre and form in which to write it, follows the rules of prosody, and uses the right diction—above all, exercises poetic licence (i.e., a conscious departing from strict fact or rule for the sake of effect) to achieve whatever aim he has in mind.

But Guru Nanak's unremitting insistence on Sahj (i.e., unconditioned spontaneity) precludes the use of premeditation in all activities, including the creation of literary works. His mantra (the master-word) is meditation on the Holy Name-a hallowed creativity that subsumes all human activities by becoming the Soil of Pragmatic Spirituality. Such a state of mind, which Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism fashions, requires for its raw material only one unalterable quality: Humility. Humility, coming as it does as a Divine Dispensation for the seeker's total self-surrender, is a superconductor through which flows the afflatus from the Source to the seeker—in an unhindered, unbroken spell. Since Ik Oankar is the (Sole) Source for all that exists, Poetry, among other works of art, is created as a Language of Prophecyand not as a form of literary work-with all the stated components melded into an organic whole. Prophecy poured out into Poetry is not Literature: It is Love. That's why it touches the listener's heartwithout resorting to any of the literary gimmicks for special effect(s).

The Upshot

Guru Nanak's **Creative Mysticism** is *not* Mythology. Mythology uses the narrative form and seeks to inform by appealing to the listener's sense of awe (largely springing from the enormity of his ignorance). Nor is his Creative Mysticism Metaphysics, which uses language to formulate premises and hypotheses to argue a case in order to prove or disprove it. Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is Poetry of a non-literary kind-spontaneous outbursts of afflatus in a fitful flash of Divine Madness: loosely termed Revelation. It will, therefore, be wrong to apply literary standards to Guru Nanak's Bani to assess what kind of Poetry it is—and whether it is great Poetry. In his frenzical spontaneity, stirred up by the hallowed hysteria of his Revelation, he transcends even the unchartered bounds of the Poetic Licence. The greatest of poets would, at best, tend to become unintelligible under the heavy spell of Poetic Licence, or, at worst, relapse into licentiousness. But in the case of Guru Nanak, Revelation-transmitting God's Word as it does in a most direct and straightforward form-attains such Wuthering Heights of Creative Mysticism as would be impossible by the use of Poetry for creating a work of literary art. Another distinction must be pointed out. Guru Nanak's Bani is an inspiring, path-finding art that dwells as a living truth in the hearts of millions of earnest seekers. The greatest of Poetry, as a literary art, collects dust in the racks of librariesremembered and quoted only by a literary élite, as an exclusive pastime sequestered from the heartbeats of workaday existence.

Our discourse has brought us to a crucial point in the present study: if **Revelation** is what distinguishes Guru Nanak's Bani from all forms of Poetry, as a literary art, is there something which sets *his* Revelation apart from other forms of Revelation known to students to Religion. This inquiry will form the subject-matter of Chapter-III.

AN ARCHITECT'S APPROACH TO CREATIVE MYSTICISM

Π

As will be shown in this chapter, Creative Mysticism is, indeed, greater than the sum of its parts: Creativity and Mysticism. Guru Nanak's Bani is a paragon of Creative Mysticism, exhorting as it does the common man to a life of *Sachiar*, as Pragmatic Spirituality, during workaday existence.

Creativity and Mysticism, considered separately, mean very different things from those actually intended by the term "Creative Mysticism". It is true, though, that, by and large, they can and do exist independent of each other. And they do so, not by any inner constraint, but by the curious compulsion that few minds are catholic, resilient, and sound enough to contain "Creative Mysticism". In the first place, Creative Mysticism is difficult to hold—and far more difficult to develop to its full potential to a level of *Sahj*. This state is unconditioned spontaneity i.e., an uninterrupted flow of energy from The Source through seed, soil, fruit, and back in a helix, which is a compounding of cyclical and linear motion in Time-Space Continuum.

Creativity, without a matching dose of Mysticism, can be highly self-indulgent in the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure which it gives. It seems to me that pleasure, regardless of its type, flavour, and richness, is the overriding principle—at least in the lives of human beings. In that case, Creativity can, indeed, drug the mind to a high degree of alienation both from the society and the self. However, it must be reiterated that no field of human endeavour is absolutely exclusive, and that there is a certain presence of Mysticism in all forms of significant Creativity. Similarly, Mysticism does have the imperative of Creativity—but more so in a dormant form. Mysticism, practised as end-in-itself, can lead to blind alleys of selfdelusion or, at best, may produce esoteric knowledge of little use to the teeming millions.

Creativity and Mysticism, in their stated forms of exclusionism, are frequently exploited by their practitioners to mislead the masses in pursuit of personal gains. Thus Creative Mysticism is a consciouslyidentified means, deliberately developed into a highly-skilled pursuit. In other words, while the practitioner of Creativity Mysticism recognises and respects the interdependence and interrelationship between Creativity and Mysticism, he makes a concerted and continual effort to bring the two into a self-renewing interaction which, by its very dynamism, leaps into progression i.e., movements of parts in perfect harmony—towards higher and better things.

Levels of Life: Before the scope and significance of Creative Mysticism, as a valid human activity, are delineated it should be in order to consider the various levels at which the mind operates—no-capacity, low-capacity, near-average-capacity, average-capacity, high-capacity, unusual-capacity, and near-full-capacity. Corresponding to this classification, levels are: Vegetating, Existing, Living, Being Alive, Mysticism, Creativity, Creative Mysticism.

Vegetating is growing and living as, or like, a vegetable. It is to live an inactive, almost purely physical, or dull life (no-capacity).

Existing is living in which the entire life is confined to livelihood: birth, survival, reproduction, and death (low-capacity).

Living is the beginning of life whereby human beings can be distinguished from other forms of life by the nature and scope of their activities. This level corresponds to the use of mind for elementary, extra-physical activities (near-average-capacity).

Being Alive is the middle-rung life on the scale of energy-utilisation. Nascent in it is the creative force responsible for the growth and evolution of the organism—in this case, the human being (average-capacity). *Mysticism*, as a seeker's way of attaining direct intercourse with God in an elevated religious feeling or ecstasy, operates the mind at high-capacity.

Creativity, as a never-ending adventure into the realm of the human spirit, impels the mind to work at unusual-capacity.

In *Creative Mysticism*, the mind works, perforce i.e., by the necessity of its own awakening/activisation, at near-full-capacity.

Seen in the light of Creative Mysticism, the Mind is neither an enigma nor an entity. It is a quantum of psycho-kinetic energy available within the cranium cavity in wide-ranging capacities from a state of dormancy to high-voltage transmission. The Generator is God (in unattributed/*Nirgun* form), the Transmitter, the Transformer is the Guru (i.e., God in His attributed (*Sargun*) form), and the Receiver is the Mind which replenishes its energy by returning it to The Source—and receives as well as consumes it through metered-supply. This and other aspects will be dealt with in detail subsequently, when contemplating "Creative Mysticism", in the study of Guru Nanak's Bani with special reference to Japuji.

Imperatives and Criteria of Creative of Creative Mysticism: It will be helpful to remember that Creative Mysticism is both Artistic Creation and Aesthetic Appreciation befittingly cast in the mould of Mysticism so that all forms of human activity become for the seeker-exponent-practitioner socially-beneficent service. With the "thought, word, and deed" in perfect, undisturbed alignment, as an orientation of the Soul with The Source, through the psychokinesis of a sound Mind lodged in a sound Body, the Primeval Energy will flow without interruption, because there are no motives attached. In such a state of productive spirituality, Mysticism will provide the length, breadth, height, and depth to the many-splendoured forms of Creativity as Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression for which Man is the unconscious-conscious Agent of God's Inviolable, All-Pervasive, Will. Following are the Imperatives and Criteria of Creative Mysticism:

Imperatives

- (a) Self-Motivation
- (b) Self-Propulsion
- (c) Self-Renewal
- (d) Self-Sustenance
- (e) Self-Sufficiency

Criteria

- (a) Conviction
- (b) Character
- (c) Communication
- (d) Construction
- (e) Canvas

An **Imperative** is a peremptory command, calling out for action.

Self-Motivation: The prefix "Self" used in this term, and the following four terms, means acting upon the agent: by, of, in relation to, etc., oneself or itself by virtue of an innate creative force. Self-Motivation is thus the urge to act (and not merely remain confined to thought and word) without any external imposition or inducement. It is an inner compulsion, without any motive attached: a choiceless inner seeking spontaneously set in motion as a natural function of activated energy.

Self-Propulsion: Once such a motion is started, it is driven forward by its own inner power. The momentum and speed it will gain, and how far it will go, are determined and regulated by the quantum of energy that lies within the agent itself.

Self-Renewal: According to Newton's First Law of Motion: "A body continues in a state by a force impressed on it". Such a driving-forward can be maintained only if the quantum of energy is constantly replenished. Hence, the need for Self-Renewal, which comes about when the Agent—in this case, the human Soul—is in touch with The Source. Such Self-Renewal will ensure that when the motion is either slowed or stopped by the resistance of other agents, replenishment of the creative force is done within the original Agent itself.

Self-Sustenance is the ability of the Agent to produce enough energy for both its own maintenance and the work it is called upon to do—besides keeping some reserves. It is a state of being sustained by the Agent's own inner resources. **Self-Sufficiency** is a state of enjoyment that comes about when there is enough for the Agent's own comfortable living. An inner satisfaction is achieved when the fruit of one's labour is shared with the less-privileged. Self-Sufficiency is a necessary condition for the Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression of the human person by means of Creative Mysticism. Indeed, in such a state of Spiritual Sovereignty, there is absolutely no taking—except from The Source; there is only giving. At its acme of attainment, Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression renders the Agent's life a long stillness of prayer in which Service (*Sewa*) becomes the Creative expression of the Mystically-awakened mind. Then its hunger for Mammon is appeased, and it gives joyously away—by sharing, by sacrificing, often by self-denying. *Sahj* is thus "Slow and steady wins the race"—not in competition with others, but by exploiting one's own inner resources through the energy and ecstasy of Naam-intoxication.

A **Criterion** is a means or standard of judging. By extension, it also means a test, a rule, or cannon.

Conviction, for the experience, exposition, and practice of Creative Mysticism, is the most important single criterion: the support and ground for erecting the citadel of Spiritual Sovereignty. It is a Trident which creates, preserves, and destroys through: *Faith*, *Discourse*, and *Optimism*, respectively. An inner Conviction is awakened by listening, contemplating, and testing the validity, veracity, and value of an idea on the anvil of lived experience through workaday existence. It is an affirmation of Creative Mysticism intrinsic to involvement in the variety and fullness of life. It is set deliberately against all tendencies and forms of escape, however esoteric or sacrosanct—to impel (not compel) the Agent to a life of the householder in a critically-evaluated choice against sequestered monasticism.

Faith is thus an unshakable, deeply-ingrained trust in Divine Dispensation and the human Mind's native ability to live up to its own exalted promise—its frequent failures notwithstanding. It is also the power to see with the inner eye (i.e., beyond sensory, perceptive, and cognitive experience) the One in Many, and Many in One—irreconcilably. Needless to say that such *eyeless* seeing draws its power

from the uninterrupted flow of energy for which the Mind is a willing and vigorous Agent in the former's cycle from and to The Source in Time-Space Continuum. In other words, Faith is the Creative Force (*Brahma* of the Hindu Trinity).

Discourse is a natural extension of Faith, a reaching-out of the Ecstasy of Communion, brought about Creative Mysticism, into Communication through Civilised Discourse—a spontaneous, heart-to-heart, conversation couched in politeness, humility, and innocence. In other words, Discourse is the Preserving Force (*Vishnu* of the Hindu Trinity).

Optimism: Soul-consciousness (*Surat*) in constant connection with The Source awakens the Mind to its ebullient vivacity. In that state, it can then never drift into depression—which is a pathological condition as everyone knows from experience, though few ever admit it. Sparks of activated Energy from within the Mind make up that disposition called Optimism whereby one is impelled to take a bright and hopeful view of things. In other words, Optimism is the Destructive Force (*Shiva* of the Hindu Trinity). Its very presence i.e., life-radiating Energy, destroys prejudice, depression, frustration, gloom, hate and despair.

Character is the sum total of peculiar qualities or distinctive features by which a thing is distinguished from others. According to Earnest Pickering, "Manifested character is the external expression of internal qualities, functions, intention." In the case of Creative Mysticism, Character irradiates a person's spiritual, mental, and moral qualities. In other words, Character serves as an unmistakable index to the essential nature of a person as a wholesome individual. For the purpose of this study, Character is a three-pronged trait or characteristic of Creative Mysticism comprising: *Spiritual Orientation, Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression*, and *Artistic Comprehensivity*.

Spiritual Orientation is a precondition of Creative Mysticism. "Spiritual" pertains to the higher faculties, the Spirit or the Soul, and connotes someone highly refined in thought and feeling, habitually or naturally looking to the things of the Spirit, the Essence underlying Appearances. "Orientation", as applied to Architecture, means a deliberate placement in a definite relation to the points of the compass or other fixed or known directions. Figuratively, it is the determination or consciousness of relative direction—also, assumption of definite direction in response to stimulus. Spiritual Orientation, thus, means facing the Mind consciously toward The Source, from where the Soul derives its life, sustenance, direction, and ultimate consummation through Creative Mysticism. Just as a house, which does not get sunlight, breeds pests and darkness, a Soul away from God (the Sun of all suns) produces prejudices, superstitions, ignorance, and inertia. Hence, the indispensability of Spiritual Orientation as a component of Character whereby Creative Mysticism is distinguished from all other pursuits—including Creativity and Mysticism taken (up) separately.

Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression: An extrovert is a person interested mainly in the world external to himself—opposed to introvert. Progression is the act or state of moving onward: movements of the parts in harmony with one another and with the whole. Spiritual Orientation impels Creative Mysticism to move from within to without, whereby the Agent enthusiastically indulges in Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression—a spontaneous reaching out, in ever-expanding horizons of socially-beneficent action, for the amelioration of the human condition as a consummation of Divine Dispensation. Without Extroversive (Altruistic) Progression, Creative Mysticism, however esoteric and exalted, is no more than Autism i.e., absorption in imaginative activity directed by the Agent's wishes, with loss of contact with reality.

Comprehensivity is the state of being all-encompassing so as to take within its sweep the entire gamut of ideas, ideals, ideologies, and issues—to the full height and depth of their concern and consummation. Comprehensivity, as a 4-D view and way of life, has fully grasped the import and inevitability of Time-Space Continuum.

Communication is a meeting and mating of the minds. It is a form of Communion (spiritual intercourse) with God in *this* world as a testimony of Truth that it is a living reality, in eternal-infinite progression—an evolution towards fuller, brighter, deeper, and higher life. Communication, as a connecting passage or channel, becomes communion when it recognises (once and for all) and promotes the spiritual fellowship of all members of the Family of Man, as God's most marvellous creation. Communication comprises: *Language, Strategy, Ratiocination,* and *Metaphor*.

Language is the vehicle of thoughts and feelings-conveyed, in spoken or written words, by the Agent to fellow human beings. It is an artificial (i.e., manmade, not natural) system of signs and symbols, with rules (grammar and syntax) for forming intelligible communication. Language, being artificial, its limitations in expressing highly-exalted experience, such as in Creative Mysticism, should be obvious. In that case, it can, at best, be only an approximation of the living (i.e., not remembered or derived) experience: an act of passing through any event or course of events actually (not vicariously) in which the Agent receives something by the Mind. Experience has three components: the Experience (the Agent), the Experienced (sensation, perception, or knowledge), and Experiencing (the Act or Event). Fuller, brighter, deeper, and higher Experience is when neither the experience nor the experienced is: only experiencing is. The process entails three stages: Absorption, Recovery, and Formulation. Absorption is the orgasmic ecstasy of losing oneself in the Act or Event. Recovery is the buoyant surfacing from a drowning state—and asking in wonderment (speechlessly) "What happened?" Formulation is the ability to put the two words "what happened" in as many words as necessary to communicate the unique freshness, febrile excitement, and exultation of "having-been-in-it". It calls forth one's creative resources, notably, the rigours of an intellectual discipline, supported by a rich imagination.

The stages of Absorption and Recovery are grounded in Mysticism. The final stage, Formulation, lies in the realm of Creativity. Independent of each other, they are partial—unconsummated. The miracle of their melding takes place in Creative Mysticism—for everyone else's benefit, besides the Agent.

Strategy is the art and science, or the uncanny ability, of adapting as precisely as possible, on the other part of the Agent, the imperatives of Language to the former's demands, drive, and diction. The test of Creative Mysticism lies in the catholicity the Agent can muster in communicating what is essentially esoteric to the lay public. Strategy,

thus, calls for stringent selectivity in the use of suitable materials, practical methods, and efficient tools of Communication.

Ratiocination is the active use of Reason in bridging the gap between the Concrete (denoting a particular thing) and the Abstract (that which represents the essence, or exists only as a mental concept). Such a formidable task is accomplished spontaneously by Creative Mysticism.

Metaphor: In the light of the foregoing analysis, it may be appreciated that long and tedious narrative of the so-called art of Story-Telling, or the ontological meanderings of Metaphysics, is best avoided. Metaphor thus comes handy when effective Communication is called for. Metaphorically, a ferocious man can be called a tiger. In this case, the big cat becomes a symbol (i.e., a word emptied of personal meaning) of ferocity, thereby transferring that feline trait to the "human animal"!

Construction, architecturally speaking, is the assembly of materials like brick, stone, concrete, steel, wood, and glass-to give physical form on ground to shelter which, at best, remains a mental concept, even when it is drawn (graphic language of Architecture) or presented as a scale-model (a proportionate replica of the actual size and shape of the building-to-be). Although construction, in essence, remains a method of putting together materials, its nature and scope changes (often dramatically) according to the medium. Each medium has its own rules and regulations, laws and principles, materials and methods-above all, limitation and potentialities. Thus, when the medium is Language, Construction would mean, in terms of the imperatives of grammar, the syntactic relations of words in a sentence. It does not really matter whether the sentence is spoken, or handwritten, typed or laser-printed. For the purpose of this study, the nature and scope of Construction would be confined to language comprising: Form, Style, Authenticity, and Participability. A brief discussion of these components should be in order-to gain an insight into the unique nature and scope of Creative Mysticism, as found in Guru Nanak's Bani.

Form: Poetry, not prose, is the Language of Prophecy-proclamation of a divine message. All Prophets are thus poets, although all poets are not prophets. Prophets are elect recipients of the Word in the raw. Poets are versifiers who, bogged down by the technicalities of diction, metre, prosody, etc., waste a great deal of energy in getting the right word, the right rhyme, the right type-according to literary standards and forms determined by others. At best, great poets end up in the libraries, for scholastic enquiry and assessment by researchers. Prophets find their place in the hearts of the people-living repositories of Faith. When the poets sing: "to be as the god, to be rejoined with the beloved, the world forgotten...", the skeptic is constrained to ask: "Is it Sacrament or con-game (a worldly swindle)?" Well, a vast majority of people cannot discriminate between the two-and poets often self-indulgent of con-game pass for spiritual-versifiers, despite the self-contradictions in their poems, especially between their poetry and their lifestyle. At this juncture, it may be helpful to distinguish between inspiration and revelation. Inspiration is stimulation by a Divinity. Revelation is Divine Communication. Inspiration may end up in monumental construction. But Revelation spontaneously assumes the garb of Creative Mysticismthereby setting Prophecy apart, in its aloof majesty, from mere Poetry however great. It must be conceded, however, that the greatest "Poetry sings always, at the end, of Transcendence. While seeing clearly and saying plainly the wickedness and terror and beauty of the world, it is at the same time humming to itself, so that one overhears rather than hears: All will be well".

In sharp contrast to the foregoing characteristic of great Poetry, Guru Nanak's Bani is a Verse of Veracity, uncontaminated by the vicissitudes of the phenomenal world, because he sees the Source as a Palpable Pervasive Presence—and sings panegyrics to Him in the ecstasy of enlightening experience. His Truth is beyond Time-Space Continuum: the Unchanging First Cause, the Material, the Maker, the Preserver, the Destroyer, and the marvellous Effect that one sees in the bounty and beauty of the Universe. For Guru Nanak, all has always been well and will always be well; because it is God's manifest Will and not a Poet's vagabond vision.

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Salient features of Guru Nanak's Divine Poetry (Bani) may now be enumerated as follow:

- Guru Nanak is invariably lyrical, not didactic. He uses communication of his Revelation, in total surrender to the Sacrament as God's benefaction. A lyric is a song-like poem fitted to be sung to the lyre, a stringed musical instrument like the harp, anciently used as an accompaniment to poetry. Guru Nanak used the rabab (rebeck) which his life-long companion, Mardana, played when the holy bard (he calls himself His Master's dhaadi) would, in moments of divine frenzy, suddenly burst forth into lyrical laudation of Ik Oankar: The Sole Monarch of All Creation. A rebeck is a mediaeval stringed instrument of the viol (precursor of violin) class shaped like a mandolin (a roundback instrument like a guitar). A lyric is best suited for expressing individual emotions-as they arise in moments of afflatus from Soul-Overself (Atman-Parmatma) connection. In sharp contrast, didactic poetry is heavy with sermons-and laboriously produced to impress (rather than express) and instruct. Thus, didactic poetry-with its large doses of prescription-is unpalatable to take, and stodgy to digest.
- Guru Nanak's Bani, in relation to God, is always panegyric, never plaintive. When it addresses humanity, it invariably commend, never condemns, thereby appealing to the intrinsic goodness of man, which he has as a Divine endowment despite his many failure to live up to it. In recognition of this fundamental truth, Guru Nanak relentlessly insists on the making of a **sachiar** (a truthful human being) in exclusive preference for raising a community of pedants, and the ceremonially-pious.
- Monotheism is irreconcilably central to Guru Nanak's Bani. Indeed, he uses the Unchanging Source as the creative force in a circuit, like the path of an electric current. This imparts to his laudatory lyrics a live-wire energy, a perennial freshness, an open innocence—above all, a pulsating concern for the amelioration of the human condition (*sarbat da bhala*, general weal). This is what gives him the Revelation that the world is the best of all possible worlds (*Dharamsaal*, a divine workshop for the making and enactment of a living *Dharma*: The Cosmic Moral Law).
• Guru Nanak's Bani has its fountainhead—in Name-intoxication (*Naam-Khumari*). Therefore, the materials, the tools, and the methods of versification come to him unconsciously in a state of Divine Madness. And he becomes, by His Maker's Grace, a law into himself. Prosody (rules of versification), diction (choice of words), metre (that regulated succession of certain groups of syllables: long and short, stresses and unstressed), etc. come to him *naturally*. In fact, they all follow, and keep rhythmic pace with, the flow of his afflatus: exalting his Bani to the acme of Creative Mysticism.

Style is the characteristic mode of presentation, construction, execution, or production in any art, especially in any of the fine arts: Poetry, Music, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. It is the quality which imparts distinctive excellence to artistic enterprise, consisting especially in the appropriateness and selectivity of relation between subject, medium, and form—and so conventionalised by the usages of an artist as to become his unmistakable signature. It may be helpful to look at Style as it applies to Architecture vis-à-vis Poetry. Style in Architecture is comparable to creative expression though Poetry, where words may be set in one or another type of metre, which would correspond to the *styles* of building design. A Poem, like a Building, may be in no particular style, or non-conformist style, of versification, but yet have a perfect composition: organisation of parts to form a whole—reflecting consistency, accord, congruity, and stirring emotive power.

Style with regard to Guru Nanak's Bani may be further examined in the light of its chief characteristics: (1) Content, (2) Simplification, (3) Civility, and (4) Counsel.

Content of Guru Nanak's Bani is a conglomerate of knowledge pertaining to sensory, perceptive, and cognitive experience. Embodies in it is a rich repository of humanity's landscape, evergreen, wondrous, and in eternal progression. Its beauty and bounty have been shown to exist everywhere, in everyday life. The Guru paints a convincing portrait of God's *Sargun* (immanent) Personality, and leaves nothing to doubt or imagination that *this* world, as His Creation, is *real*, not illusory: only impermanent in terms of its Eternal Progression. Since in such a Scheme of Things, no two things are identical nor will ever be the same, the illusion of this world's *un-real-ness*, to the ignorant, or "I"-oriented, Mind, is natural.

Simplification is the hallmark of Guru Nanak's truly exceptional genius. He has explicated the most abstract concepts in concrete, intelligible terms. Indeed, his method is to start from the concrete, and pronounce his lyrical laudation encompassing the abstract. In so doing, he brings the most forbidding of esoteric knowledge to the doorstep of the common man—in carefree raptures of instant illumination.

Civility of discourse, as discernible in Guru Nanak's Bani, is unique. Never does he utter a harsh word against anyone or anything or any system. Nor does he ever run down Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism. Condemnation is *not* his culture. His spiritual sovereignty elevates him to a level of humanness where commendation becomes a habit of the mind: his unique way of civilised discourse. His Creative Mysticism is divinised Democracy, a polity of purified souls becomes self-sufficient in *Naam*-intoxication. Innocent service of the poor, not their clever swindling by rule, is their life-fulfilling mission.

Counsel, not conversion, is Guru Nanak's way of helping the ignorant, the downtrodden, the poor, and the ego-stricken high and low. Indeed, his religion is based on *Dharma* (The Cosmic Moral Law)—and is uniquely non-sectarian, non-communal, and non-denominational. In his inspired reckoning, *Dharma* is God's All-Pervasive Quintessence: Spirit-Subtle Personality that only the pure (*sachiar*) can discern with the heart's-eye.

Authenticity is what distinguishes Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism from all brands of Creativity and/or Mysticism. Authenticity is truly democratic. It does not respect any caste, creed, colour, and race. Nor does it recognise position, age, or birth. Only the true (i.e., what is substantiated by *real* facts) and what is of verifiable (not necessarily established) credibility are entitled to its fastidious acceptance. Authenticity is the singular, unchanging imperative of Truth. That is why it cannot be indoctrinated. It must keep pace with the Eternal Progression of the Ultimate Reality. In sharp contradistinction, Authority is every inch a feudalist. In brooks no questioning, much less opposition. It often assumes political, social, or legal power, which cannot be challenged. Authority sets dogma above liberty—and makes life a static, repetitive affair; at best, an imitation of itself. It should be obvious that Authenticity can neither be created nor verified by imagination, speculation, or wishful thinking. Therefore, Guru Nanak verifies the life, and the world in which it exists through empirical observation and investigative dialogue; then, corroborates it by Divine Dispensation; and, finally, authenticates it by personal, firsthand (not bookish or based on hearsay) experience. Its interpretation and exposition, in terms of the Imperatives and Criteria of Communication, subsequently flow like a stream of hymnody from The Himalayas of Creative Mysticism.

Participability is another salient feature of Guru Nanak's Bani. The circuitry of Creative Mysticism impels him to draw the listening, believing-reflecting, Mind into a refreshing dialogue whereby he exalts it in fitful flashes of self-realisation. In the sense, Participability is a natural corollary of Authenticity. With no claims to being an Authority on matters esoteric, he spontaneously steps down-into the midst of everyday life. His Creative Mysticism is thus participatory: a perennial stream of God's grace made accessible to all and sundry. In his oneto-one encounter, he persuades, by the overwhelming eloquence of his own personal example, the other participants into spontaneous soulsearching-and insists, without overbearing external imposition, that he assumes full responsibility and accountability for all his acts of omission and commission in everyday life. This enables the participant (the devotee, of God, not Guru Nanak's) to exercise his own free will, to take recourse to his own inner resources, and to straighten out the course of his "thought, word, and deed" by orienting his mind God-ward. He is not showing his way (that would be proselytism or conversion, which he is most certainly not doing) to the devotee. He is transmitting to him the undiminishing euphoria of Naam-contemplation-the quaffing of ambrosia that the orgasmic mating of the Soul-Bride with the Divine Husband spontaneously brings about.

By his Creative Mysticism, Guru Nanak brings all knowledge (*Gyan*)—Book of Life, Book of Nature, Book of Wisdom (All Scriptures), and Book of Grace—within the immediate reach of the

poorest of the poor—timelessly, and universally, thereby enlarging and extending the Revealed Word (*Gurbani*) as life evolves through a multi-dimensional historical process.

Canvas is a coarse cloth made of hemp or other material, now especially cotton, used for sails, tents, etc., and for painting on. Canvas is mounted on a stretcher for oil-painting. The metaphor should be obvious in the discussion of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism. His Bani is, indeed, a veritable museum of painting, word-pictures, of breathtaking beauty painted on the canvas of the human spirit: forever pulsating with the breath of divine inspiration, for the present study, the term "Canvas" connotes the amazing range of concepts, issues, themes, topics, and fields of human endeavour. Guru Nanak's Bani also takes within its sweep "What's What in the World" and "Who's Who in Myth and Reality". The subjects listed below are only illustrative, *not* exhaustive, of Guru Nanak's Bani.

Social mores. Culture. Commerce. Farming. Baptism. Customs. Conventions. Rites. Rituals. *Mantras.* Myths. Mythology. Metaphysics (truth). Aesthetics (beauty). Ethics (goodness). Politics. Logic. Society. Sects. Cults. Householder's life. Pandit. Mulla. Qazi. God. Guru. Cosmogony. Prophecy. Salvation. Good life. Religion. Renunciation. *Dharma* (The Cosmic Moral Law). Worship. Prayer. Yoga. The Scriptures. Hinduism. Buddhism. Jainism. Islam. *Tirathas* (Holy Places). *Yatras* (Pilgrimages). Life. Death. *Avatars* (Reincarnations). Reward. Punishment. Gods and Goodness. Heavens and Hell.

An Architect's Approach to Creative Mysticism can be summed up thus. In Guru Nanak's Bani, Revelation makes his Mysticism a Timeless *Experience*, and his Creativity a Universal *Expression* for communicating God's Word (*Shabad*) for the general weal of all Humankind (*Sarbat da Bhala*). In other words, Creative Mysticism, as enshrined in Guru Nanak's Bani, holisticises the quintessence of Religious Life, and develops the seeker's Spirituality pragmatically during workaday existence.



In this chapter, Revelation has been dealt within the terms of its nature and significance, its types and variations, etc., to prepare a broad framework in which to examine the exceptional merit of Guru Nanak's Revelation in Chapter-IV.

Revelation and Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak communicates a vision born of Revelation—with blood still dripping from its placental membranes, rather than create an autonomous world of mythical characters with no relationship to the world of palpable materiality divorced from the historical process.

His unmistakable qualities are a flamelike intensity sheathed in the cold, undiminishing splendour of Truth; an elevating ecstasy; an existential urgency; and an illuminating insight into the abysmal depths of the Divine Mystery. He transmits a feeling of inward sympathy with all that he reveals, whether it belongs to the human world, or to the world of animal life, or of inanimate matter. His divinising depiction is accompanied by a warm suffusion of pleasure, rather than a shuddering chill of unpleasantness. His Revelation is not simply an abstract allegory divorced from historical events, nor merely a prophecy concerning the final upheaval at the end of the world, couched in obscure language. Rather, it deals with the perennial crisis of Man caught in the throes of Evolution, and his irresolvable predicament characteristic by Shakespearean "to be or not to be". His is not even a question of Faith. It is a fulfilment emanating from fact-to-face "seeking" by the Spiritual Eye opened by God's Own Glance of Grace (*nadar*). That is why Guru Nanak does not teach—nor hands down any occult formulae. He transmits with a pulsating freshness what he himself directly experiences, and thereby transforms the heeding, hearkening, reflecting, and believing individual who earnestly seeks spiritual food for his Truth-Starved Self.

Frequent reference has been made to Revelation to pin down the crucial point of the thesis that Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is neither Mythology, nor Metaphysics, nor the Muse, not even Mysticism treated as a religion of the élite. Rather it is a firsthand face-to-face "seeing" with the Spiritual Eye Opened by God's Own Glance of Grace. In order to evaluate the nature and scope of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, it is, therefore, necessary to consider the very nature and scope of Revelation itself. That should provide us the necessary matrix in which to see the distinctive features of the Guru's Revelation—and to assess, how far and in what manner; it makes a departure from the various forms of Revelation known to humankind. Following is a brief delineation of what Revelation is; its Nature and Significance; and its Types and Variations.

Revelation (EB, Vol. 15, pp. 783-786)

Revelation is a religious term that designates the disclosure of divine or sacred reality or purpose to men. In the religious view, such disclosure may come through mystical insights, historical events, or spiritual experiences that transform the lives of individuals or groups.

Nature and Significance

Every great religion acknowledges revelation in the wide sense that its followers are dependent on the privileged insights of its founder or of the original group or individuals with which the faith began. These profound insights into the ultimate meaning of life and the universe, which have been handed down in religious traditions, are arrived at. It is believed, not so much through logical inference as through sudden, unexpected illuminations that invade and transform the human spirit. Those religions that look upon God as a free and personal spirit distinct from the world accept revelation in the more specific sense of a divine self-disclosure, which is commonly depicted on the model of human inter-subjective relationships. In the "prophetic" religions [Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Zoroastrianism], revelation is conceived as a message communicated by God to an accredited spokesman to an entire people. Revelations received on behalf of the whole community of the faithful are called "public" as opposed to "private" revelations, which are given for the guidance or edification of the recipient himself.

The media by which revelation occurs are variously conceived. Most religions refer to signs, such as auditory phenomena, subjective visions, often associated with magical techniques of divination. In the prophetic religions, revelation is primarily understood as the "Word of God", enabling the prophet to speak with certainty about God's actions and intentions. In mystical religions (e.g., Islamic Sufism, Tantric Buddhism) revelation is viewed as an ineffable experience of the transcendent or the divine.

Types and Variations of Revelation

Primitive Religions. In primitive culture, revelation is frequently identified with the experience of supernatural power (*Mana*) in connection with particular physical objects, such as stones, amulets, bones of the dead, unusual animals, and other objects. The sacred or holy is likewise believed to be present in sacred trees, groves, shrines, and the like, and in elemental realities such as earth, water, sky, and heavenly bodies. Once specified as holy, such objects take on symbolic value and become capable of mediating numinous (spiritual) experiences to the adherents of a cult. Certain charismatic individuals, such as shamans, who are believed to be in communion with the sacred or holy, perform functions akin to those of the sacred and the mystic in more developed religions.

Religions of the East. Eastern religions are concerned with man's struggle to understand and cope with the predicament of his existence in the world and to achieve emancipation, enlightenment, and unity with the Absolute. Western religions, on the other hand, lay more stress on man's obedient response to the sovereign Word of God. The notion of revelation in the specific sense of a divine self-communication is more apparent in Western than in Eastern religions.

Hinduism. In Hinduism, the dominant religion of India, revelation is generally viewed as a process whereby the religious seeker, actuating his deeper spiritual powers, escapes from the world of change and illusion and comes into contact with ultimate reality. The sacred books are held to embody revelation insofar as they reflect the eternal and necessary order of things.

A major form of Hindu thought, Vedanta, includes two main tendencies: the monistic (*Advaita*) and the theistic (*bhakti*). The leading sage of Advaita Vedanta, Sankara (early 9th century), while acknowledging in principle the possibility of coming to a knowledge of the Supreme Reality (Brahman) through inner experience and contemplation of the grades of being, held that in practice a vivid apprehension of the divine arises from meditation on the sacred books, especially the *Upanishads*. In Bhakti, systemized by the philosopher Ramanuja (c. 1050-1137), the Absolute is regarded as personal and compassionate. Revelation, consequently, is viewed as the gracious self-manifestation of the divine to those who open themselves in loving contemplation. The devotional theism of Bhakti, very influential in modern India, resembles the pietism and mysticism of the Western religions.

Buddhism. Buddhism, the great religion originating on Indian soil, conceives of revelation not as a personal intervention of the Absolute into the worldly realm of relativities but as an enlightenment gained through discipline and meditation. Gautama the Buddha (6th to 5th century BCE), after a striking experience of human transitoriness and a period of ascetical contemplation, received an illumination that enabled him to become the supreme teacher for all his followers. Although Buddhists do not speak of supernatural revelation, they regard the Buddha as a uniquely eminent discoverer

of liberating truth. Some venerate him, some worship him, and all Buddhists seek to initiate him as the most perfect embodiment of ideal manhood—an ideal that he in some way "reveals".

Chinese Religions. Chinese wisdom, more world-affirming than the ascetical religions of India, accords little or no place to revelation as this term is understood in the Western religions, though Chinese traditions do speak of the necessity of following a natural harmony in the universe. Taoism, perhaps the most characteristic Chinese form of practical mysticism, finds revelation only in the transparency of the immanent divine principle or way (Tao). Confucianism, while not incompatible with Taoism, is oriented less toward natural mysticism and more toward social ethics and decorum, though it too is concerned with accommodating life to a balance in the natural flow of existence. Confucius (551-479 BCE), who refined the best moral teachings that had come down in the tradition, was neither a prophet appealing to divine revelation nor a philosophical seeking to give reasons for his doctrine!

Religions of the West. In the three great religions of the West— Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—revelation is the basic category of religious knowledge. Man knows God and his will because God has freely revealed himself—his qualities, purpose, or instructions.

Judaism. The Israelite faith looked back to the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) for its fundamental revelation of God. God was believed to have revealed himself to the patriarchs and prophets by various means not unlike those known to the primitive religions—theophanies (visible manifestations of the divine), dreams, visions, auditions, and ecstasies—and also, more significantly, by his mighty deeds, such as his bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and enabling them to conquer the Holy Land. Moses and the prophets were viewed as the chosen spokesman who interpreted God's will and purposes to the nation. Their inspired words were to be accepted in loving obedience as the Word of God.

Rabbinic Judaism, which probably originated during the Babylonian Exile and became organised after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, concerned itself primarily with the solution of legal and ethical problems. It gradually developed an elaborate system of casuistry resting upon the Torah (the Law, or the Pentateuch) and its approved commentaries, especially the Talmud (commentaries on the Torah), which was regarded by many as equal to the Bible in authority. Orthodox Judaism still recognizes these authoritative sources and insists on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, or at least of the Pentateuch.

Christianity. The New Testament took its basic notions of revelation from the contemporary forms of Judaism (1st century BC and 1st century AD)—i.e., from both normative rabbinic Judaism and the esoteric doctrines current in Jewish apocalyptic circles in the Hellenistic world. Accepting the Hebrew Scriptures as preparatory revelation, Christianity maintains that revelation is brought to its unsurpassable climax in the person of Jesus Christ, who is God's own Son (Heb. 1:1-2), his eternal Word (John 1:1), and the perfect image of the Father (Col. 1:15). The Christianity revelation is viewed as occurring primarily in the life, teaching, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, all interpreted by the apostolic witnesses under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Commissioned by Jesus and empowered by the divine spirit, the apostle, as the primary herald holds a position in Christianity analogous to that of the prophets in ancient Israel.

Islam. Islam, the third great religion of the West, has its basis in revelations received by Mohammed (c. 7th century AD). These were collected shortly after his death into the Quran (Koran), which is regarded by Muslims as the final, perfect revelation-a human copy of the eternal book, dictated to the prophet. While Islam accords prophetic status to Moses and Jesus, it looks upon the Quran as a correction and completion of all that went before. More than either Judaism or Christianity, Islam is a religion of the Book. Revelation is understood to be a declaration of God's will rather than his personal self-disclosure. Insisting as it does on the absolute sovereignty of God, on man's passivity in relation to the divine, and on the infinite distance between creator and creature, Islam has sometimes been inhospitable to philosophical speculation and mystical experience. Yet in medieval Islam there was both a remarkable flowering of Arabic philosophy and the intense piety of the mystical Sufis. The rationalism of some philosophers and the theosophical tendencies of some of the Sufis came into conflict with official orthodoxy.

Zoroastrianism. A fourth great prophetic religion, which should be mentioned for its historic importance, is Zoroastrianism, once the national faith of the Persian Empire. Zoroaster (Zarathustra), a prophetic a monotheistic faith and a stern devotion to truth and righteousness. At the age of 30 he experienced a revelation from Ahura Mazda (the Wise) and chose to follow him in the battle against the forces of evil. This revelation enabled Zoroaster and his followers to comprehend the difference between good (Truth) and evil (the Lie) and to know the one true God. Later forms of Zoroastrianism apparently had an impact on Judaism, from the time of the Babylonian Exile, and, through Judaism, on Christianity.

Revelation and Reason. The problem of the relationship between revelation and reason arises, on the one hand, because revelation transcends the categories of ordinary rational thought and, on the other hand, because revelation is commonly transmitted by means of authoritative records, the contents of which cannot be verified by the believer. Buddhism, since it does not attribute inspiration or inerrancy to its canonical sources, allows some scope of individual reason to criticize the authoritative writings, but, like other religions, it has to face the charge that the illumination to which it aspires may be illusory. Orthodox Hindus, giving full authority to the Vedas, hold that human reason errs wherever, on the grounds of perceptual experience, it takes issue with the sacred writings. Hinduism, however, allows far greater freedom in the exegesis (interpretation) of its sacred books, some of which are more poetic than doctrinal.

The tension between faith and reason has been particularly acute in the Western religions, which find revelation not simply in the holy books but in prophetic words that call for definite assent and frequently command a precise course of action. The ambiguities of scripture in these religions are frequently cleared up by creeds and dogmas of the community, calling for the assent of true believers. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, moreover, came into close contact with Hellenistic culture, which help up the ideal of rationally certified knowledge as the basis for the good knowledge. They, therefore, had to face the problem: could assent to an authoritative revelation be

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justified before the bar of reason? Some theologians took a "fideist" (faith-based) position, maintaining that reason must in all things submit to the demands of revelation. Others, such as the Arabic philosopher Averroes and his followers (both Muslim and Christian), accepted the primacy of reason. They interpreted the content of revelation so as to bring it into line with science and philosophy. A third school, in which the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides and the medieval Christian scholastic theologian Thomas Aquinas may be included, sought to maintain the primacy of faith without sacrificing the dignity of reason. According to the Thomist theory, human reason can discern the credibility of revelation because of the external signs by which God has authenticated it (especially prophecies and miracles). Reason, moreover, makes it possible for the believer to understand, in some measure, the revealed mysteries. This intellectual position continues to appeal to many Christians; but some maintain that it overlooks the qualitative differences between faith-as a trans-rational assent to mystery-and scientific knowledge, which operates within the limits of objectivising reason.

Conclusion

In some theological circles concept of revelation is rejected on the ground that it is bound up with mythological and anthropomorphic conceptions and introduces an unassailable element into the history of religions. It would seem, however, that the concept can be purified of these mythical elements and still be usefully employed. In the sphere of religions, wisdom is often best sought through privileged moments of ecstatic experience and through the testimony of those who have perceived the sacred or holy with unusual purity and power. The self-disclosure of the divine through extraordinary experiences and symbols is fittingly called revelation. Because of the pervasiveness of the idea of revelation in the world's religions and because the various religions have had to cope with similar theological problems concerning revealed knowledge, revelation has become a primary theme for dialogue among the great religion of mankind.



The main component of this study is the Japuji, which has been examined in this chapter as the art and science of Architecture. The four elements of Architecture: Space, Structure, Form, and Time are built into an edifice with the tools and methods of Design which, in one sense, is synonymous with Composition (the act of putting together different parts to form a meaningful whole), and has to do with all the arts. "Design adds to plan (a mental image of the endproduct) an emphasis on intention (as artistic or divine intention) in the disposition of individual members or details, often thereby suggesting a definite pattern; since it is used frequently in reference to a complete work, it often implies reference to the degree in which order, harmony, or integrity have been achieved in spite of diversity in the parts, or in which there is the beauty that results from unity in variety". (Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms, 1968, p. 611).

In this chapter, Architecture of the Japuji has been studied in terms of: **Design and Structure and Form**. "Design" entails the concept of the created work and, indeed, operates as a genetic imperative in the act of creation. "Structure and Form" are what give Architecture its materiality or physical existence. "Space" is the container, like a room in a building, of the Design intent. In the case of the Japuji, the message of the Word (*Shabda*) revealed through Guru Nanak. "Time" is the chronometric scale of its validity, veracity, and durability—besides the implication of the seeker's movement from one level (*Pauri*) to the other,

until he falls in love with the Japuji like he does in the case of the house he lives in. It is to be hoped that the reader will experience the kind of thrill that this writer does when he himself recites Guru Nanak's Japuji in terms of the palpable excitement of moving in, around and up, this magnificent Edifice of the Soul. There is so much to discover, to absorb, and to live upon—until the entire exercise becomes a habit of the mind (*Sahj*): a long stillness of prayer couched in aesthetic appreciation of the beauty and bounty of God's many-splendoured creation.

Design of the Japuji

Japuji, in its original form, is the name of Guru Nanak's *magnum opus*, which is the sheet anchor (e.g., chief support; first and last refuge for an earnest seeker of Truth) of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, The Holy Book of the Sikhs (literally, disciples of the Guru, the spiritual preceptor—or the one who dispels the darkness of ignorance by transmitting to the Sikh the light of Truth). Sri Guru Granth Sahib (henceforth abbreviated as SGGS and used as such in this study), a 1430-page volume, literally, means "Mr Book" because the Sikhs revere the scripture as a personification of God's Word revealed through the Guru. The same unremitting reverence is extended to "Japu" which becomes "Japuji" or "Japuji Sahib". The suffix "ji" is a cultural title of respect for the elderly and the venerable. Similarly, "sahib" as a term of respect given in India to persons of rank (and to Europeans) comes from Arabic as a synonym for "Sir" or "Mr". One can thus appreciate the high esteem in which Guru Nanak's most widely-read Bani, "Japu", is held by all Sikhs.

"Japuji", literally, is an exhortation to the seeker of Truth to "recite" what follows this title in the Scripture. This is of crucial importance because the word is preceded by *Mul Mantra* and followed by the creedal maxim: *Adi sach jugadi sach...Mul Mantra* is compounded of two words "Mul", meaning root, an essence; and "Mantra", originally Vedic hymn. In its derivative (and, now, autonomous status), it means a mystic formula or a sacred text used as an incantation or to invoke the deity. When extended to music, it is believed to have mystical effect on the hearer. However, in the case of Japuji, the *Mul Mantra* stands for the

Axiomatic Statement of Faith based on Truth revealed to Guru Nanak, the founding prophet of Sikhism: The way of the *Gurmukh* (literally Guru-oriented) or the humble Sikh who forever remains in a process of learning, or eternal studentship.

In the present study, the *Mul Mantra* has been treated as a Preamble to the Constitution of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, as the Commonwealth of Pragmatic Spirituality, that subsumes all faiths of the world (*sagal jamaati* ... all creeds). In other words, the *Mul Mantra* sets forth axiomatically the ineluctable outline of a Democratic Socialism of Souls—offered by Guru Nanak on a platter of God's own infinite Mercy and Grace for the redemption of the entire Family of Man sired by the Almighty Father. It runs thus: God is the Sole Supreme Being; of Eternal Manifestation; Creator, Immanent Reality; Without Fear; Without Rancour; Timeless Form; Unincarnated; Self-Existent; Realisable by grace of the holy preceptor.

"Japu", which follows the fundamental creed noted above, thus becomes a prayer-chant that the seeker of Truth is exhorted to repeat *ad infinitum*. The maxim that comes next leaves no doubt as to this interpretation. Here goes: In primal time, in all time was the Creator, Nothing is as real as the Eternal. Nothing shall abide but Truth; the Eternally Unchanging Reality (of the Sole Creator Himself).

The Japuji, *Dhur di Bani* (i.e., straight from The Source), as revealed to Guru Nanak, was transmitted by him to others in umpteen discourses during his odysseys over long periods of time in India and other countries. The beneficiaries of his new found Creative Mysticism were *siddhas, yogis*, mendicants, spiritualists, and the common folks. When he finally settled down at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak assigned the task of editing and the arrangement of *Pauris* (literally, steps) to his spiritual heir Bhai Lehna (later, Guru Angad Dev). Embodied in Japuji is the message of Truth and an inspiring account of scores of virtues and qualities for the redemption of the human soul.

In consists of 38 *Pauris* which start after the Creedal Maxim as noted above. A facile combination of the function of explanation and the narrative form conjures up an amazing Time-Space Continuum in which everything is presented with cinematographic palpableness and amazing immensity captured in sensuous simultaneity. The identification marks of the many masks and guises in which human beings masquerade; the victors; the victims; the heroes and the humble mortals; the wise and the fools; the virtuous and the vicious; the deeds one sows and the harvest one reaps; the saints and the sinners; the devotee and the renegade; the nature and the elements; God's infinite Attributes; the spiritual endeavour of Salvation through *Dharma* (Cosmic Moral Law), *jnana* (knowledge), *sarma* (labour of love), *karma* (grace), and *sach* (communion with Truth) *khand* (the five stated realms) are all there expounded in remarkable compactness and compelling beauty.

Devotional remembrance of God's Name (*Naam-Simran*) has been spelt in an easy-to-grasp, common man's language. Its polite, yet irresistible, persuasion derives one into a self-help initiative of farreaching consequence whereby one's life-long quest would acquiesce only in one's spiritual fulfilment on Communion with the Sole Creator; the bride-soul's Sole Spouse.

etu rah(i) pat(i) paurhiyan charhiyai hoye ikees. (Japuji, pauri 32)

By climbing the steps so delineated in this Path of the Divine Husband, one eventually becomes merged with God's Own Light.

As may be seen, Guru Nanak's Japuji has been stated to be "Japu Nissan" in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It means that this Bani is the marchflag for accessing the Realm of Truth. It is averred that whatsoever has this Bani with him at the time of his death is welcomed to God's Timeless-Spaceless Home:

> Re re dargeh kahai na ko-ou Aao baith aadar sabhu de-ou.

Nobody at the Dargah utters an unsavoury remark. But rather everybody welcomes the seeker's soul with love and reverence.

The Japuji, in a nutshell, propounds and expounds all that lies in, and transcends, the techniques of *Sravana*, *Manana*, and *Nidhyasan*— which mean, respectively: listening, believing, and encountering. This is a perfect compendium of all virtues and qualities, derived directly from The Source. Imbibing them in one's life, by reading or hearing the Japuji, one can set oneself on the coveted Path of Salvation—by Guru's Grace.

The Epilogue of the Japuji is a *Sloku* by Guru Angad Dev. It is the most marvellous finale of Guru Nanak's *magnum opus*, explicating as it does the quintessence of his Revelation, in picturesque imagery and palpable metaphor available to everyone, twenty-four hours of the day, every day, everywhere, during workaday existence. Its nuclear Noumenon can be matched by no mythology, no metaphysics, no muse—yet known to humankind—as these disciplines rarely transcend the Phenomenal notions of Ultimate Reality.

Guru Nanak's Japuji is an edifice (Architecture) of the Soul, whose concept has been stated in the *Mul Mantra* (the creedal proclamation) as follows:

Truth is the sole Infallible Principle of God who Himself is the Generator, Operator, and Destroyer (G-O-D). Truth is what is beyond the matrix of Space and Time; the two fundamental elements constituting the universes. Since all creation proceeds from them, there is an all-pervasiveness of this Transcendent Truth. Also, it is axiomatic that God being the Sole Primal Person looking after the three functions of Creation, Operation (and protection/preservation), and Destruction (or Re-Absorption), He is the only One of His Kind without a second. All this tends to sound too abstract for the teeming millions. Guru Nanak, therefore, presents (as is *revealed* to him, not as he imagines, speculates, or philosophises) the concrete aspect of God for the benefit of all and sundry. He resolves the curious paradox by naming the Multi-Dimensional, Many-Splendoured, Immanence of God.

It is important to appreciate that Guru Nanak's Creedal Proclamation is neither Poetry (the Muse), nor Mythology, not even Metaphysics. Just the same, he uses *poetry* as the Language of Prophecy to give form to his Revelation in which there is logic of a supramental kind. This logic is axiomatic by the very strength of its inner light.

Thus, he says God is All-in-All, without assistants, co-workers, or managers. He is the Sole Primal Lord, beyond the Concept of Trinity: such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, or Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost (Spirit). Since God is the One, and Only One, in full unchanging command of all the functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction (including their materials and methods which too proceed from Him), He is without fear, and without enmity. Equals and Unequals alone suffer from these self-defeating emotions: fear and enmity.

God is an Immutable Being: He is the Supreme Law-Maker. Unincarnated (unlike what other religions believe and profess), Self-Existent. God is a Being that never dies, nor is even incarnated. But always by Himself Exists.

Yet such a God is eminently (though not too easily) realizable if a Guru (himself an active transfiguring spark of his undiminishing splendour) gives the seeker the realization he seeks as sacrament (*Prasada*). Guru is the path-finder, or more appropriately, the doorkeeper of God's Formless Mansion: The Realm of Truth (*sach khand*). Admittance to the Faith of Revelation is exclusively and eternally by the Grace of the Guru. The seeker moves God-ward through the Gate of the Holy Preceptor, which is thus aptly called *Guru-Dwara*.

The one pre-eminent pre-qualification for admittance to *Sach Khand* is the remembrance-rife unbroken chain of prayer-chants (*Japu*) in praise of God. This is the mind-cleansing ablution preparing the seeker to a fore-ordained standard of purity without which probity is impossible to access.

And, then, Guru Nanak builds the Temple of God on the Four Pillars whose very material is Truth: the Unchanging, the Infinite, the Eternal—True was He before Time was born; True was He when Time began its course; True is He even now; True shall He evermore be (*The Prologue of Japuji*).

Raised on this Immovable Four-Pillar Foundation is a 38-stroreyed Edifice of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism in which he reveals to the seeker, step by step (*pauri* by *pauri*), the ascent of his soul whose restless wandering through aeons of time in the phenomenal world acquiesce in bliss when it reaches the Realm of Truth (God's Own Formless Eternal Mansion or *Sach Khand*). But the austere impassivity of the seeker's self, the stoic exactitude of Truthful Living (*sachiar*) having attained to a state of unconditioned spontaneity (*Sahj*) rests atop Truth at the 38th storey whose finial is the unmistakable Uno Numero of God's Unmatched Uniqueness: His Inviolable Monarchy over all Noumena, Phenomena, and Nothingness. The Architecture of God's Temple, as revealed by Guru Nanak, is an absorbing Construct of Time-Space Continuum employing all the basic geometrical solids: cube, pyramid, cone, sphere, cylinder, tetrahedron, prism.

Cube is the Four-Pillar Foundation, representing the concrete form of Transcendent Truth. *Kaaba* (Arabic for cube) is the holiest of the holy for the Muslims. It embodies both this-worldly (material) and otherworldly (spiritual) dimensions in the selfsame geometrical solid. The cube opens out to a Latin Cross when its six squares are developed on a two-dimensional surface, thereby representing Jesus Christ, Compassion Personified. No wonder the Muslims recognise him as one of their own Prophets. The Cross symbolises sacrifice as well as self-abnegation i.e., when one "crosses" oneself (as the Christian habitually do) one symbolically negates oneself. The beauty about Cube is that it is a perfect solid in terms of aesthetic appeal. All its six constituent surfaces are complete squares which admit of no disputation as to their proportion (a basic criterion in the evaluation of an object's visual aesthetic).

Pyramid is the most stable solid which no earthquake, however mighty, can raze to the ground because it is widest at the base. Since its four triangular sides meet at a point, a pyramid also symbolises the arduousness of the seeker's spiritual ascent. Perhaps no other form is more difficult to demolish than the pyramid. No wonder the Egyptians, in their uncanny wisdom, chose pyramids as the most apt "houses for the dead"—impossible to bury under the sands, extremely difficult to demolish.

Cone is similar to a pyramid but more organic. It has no hard sides, only one seamless, continuous surface, springing from a circular base (dilution) and gracefully ascending to a point (concentration)!

Sphere is the perfect form when it comes to constant motion: an exact opposite of cube, marked by its unruffled poise. Cube is frozen; Sphere is fluid. No wonder sphere is the most prevalent solid in the entire universe. All heavenly bodies, stars and planets, are spheres dancing tirelessly in Space, which, according to Albert Einstein, is also spherical! Sphere, both by its fluid shape and ubiquity, best symbolises God's Omnipresence: All-Pervasive Palpableness.

Cylinder, capped by a hemisphere, gives the shape of the Nuclear Reactor in which fission builds up a chain reaction to produce enormous quanta of energy from a tiny nucleus. To my reckoning, the OM in OMKAR (also spelt as OANKAR), with its three basic sounds of 'a', 'u', 'm', is the Nuclear Reactor of the Soul, which is Matter (Body) become Energy (Spirit) through Naam-Simran. Naam-Simran is akin to bombardment of the nucleus with neutrons in that Naam is repeatedly aimed at the nucleus, the crucial centre of soul-consciousness (Surt), lodged with the cranium cavity. Countless repetitions of the Holy Name are aimed at producing a chain reaction so that the Energy released from the Soul (nucleus) could be marshalled for a God-Ward Ascent via the Cosmic Architecture revealed by Guru Nanak in his Bani, notably, The Japuji. Without such ebullient energy, the Soul cannot release itself from the enormous gravitational pull of EARTH-ly attachments of which the Body is a willing captive!

Tetrahedron is a solid of four sides, each an equilateral triangle. According to Buckminster Fuller, American designer-thinker, tetrahedron is the basic solid in the structure of the Universe. And it occupies the minimum space, besides its amenability to compound forms, which turn out to be the most economical too. He demonstrated his discovery through his world-famous invention: The Geodesic Dome, which employs the principle of tetrahedrons—to infinity!

Without **Prism**, the truth about light, that it is composed of seven colours (VIBGYOR: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red) could never have been revealed. While one prism breaks white light into seven colours, another one in conjunction with it absorbs the entire spectrum back into white light. Could there be a better and more

fascinating metaphor for God's Transcendence (Irreducible Oneness) and Immanence (Many-Splendoured Manyness)?

Structure and Form of the Japuji

Architecture, fundamentally, is the Unmanifest become Manifest through Structure ad Form in Time-Space Continuum. Therefore, the Architecture of God's Mansion, revealed by Guru Nanak in the *Mul Mantra* of The Japuji, is worth exploring as the Holy Personage takes the seeker, level by level, on his Spiritual Ascent through the 38-storeyed Skyscraper—for his ultimate merger with The Source that abides in *Sach Khand*.

In terms of the analogy of Architecture, on the basis of which this study of Guru Nanak's Bani is being done, *Pauri* corresponds to "step", "stair", or, more precisely, "level" or "floor", because the whole edifice is a 38-storeyed Skyscraper. Starting from the nether world (foundation), it builds up, level by level, exposing the ascending soul to the bounty and beauty of God's marvellous creation, until it scales the Realm of Truth (*Sach Khand*). And thence towers beyond all Phenomena and Noumena to become a point *Bindu*) of the *Kalasha* (finial) as a culminating feature of its Spiritual Architecture.

Immediately next to the Four-Pillar Foundation of *Adi sach jugadi sach* ... is Pauri-1, the ground floor, where rests Guru Nanak's first Sacrament for the seeking soul, in terms of concretisation of the concept he has enunciated in the *Mul Mantra*. The Number "4" in the foundation symbolises the four point of the compass, thereby covering the entire Space with its manifest-vacuity extending to infinity—and beyond. It also stands for Time in terms of its aspects of past, present, and future. The Guru mentions a state precedent to the creation of Time, thereby extending its manifest-temporality to Eternity—and beyond.

Thus, before the seeker begins his Spiritual Ascent, he is exposed to the Time-Space Continuum in which Time is the Fourth Dimension of Space, having (conventionally) only three dimensions: length, breadth/ width, and height/depth. This is a scientific discovery of the highest order, made by Albert Einstein—the greatest scientist since Isaac Newton—who holds space to be spherical. The way Guru Nanak stresses this all-important fact is axiomatic. The Time-Space Continuum, in his Revelation, holds the interdependence, interrelationship, and interaction between Time and Space as *sine qua non* to their unique function as the two Elements of which the Architecture of Cosmos is made. The one and only one evidence of God's Incomparable and Inalienable Architectonics is the existence of Nature in its bewildering Bounty and breathtaking Beauty. Nature (*qudrat*) has been created by God as a matrix of everything that flowed/flows from the Act of Creation: Life in all its charming forms—plants, insects, reptiles, birds, beasts, sub-humans, and human beings. For Nature's endless Evolution (Progression), God's Inscrutable Will pulsates through ALL Creation as His Palpable Immanence.

Mysterious may be the ways of God. But one can certainly get a glimpse of the mesmeric mystery with the heart's-eye cleansed of the grime of Ego by pursuing Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism through which God's Name runs as an energising-illuminating Principle. In other words, the Divine Mystery, as manifest in the many-splendouredness of Nature, is both Creative and Mystical. The implication is that Nature, as a Product of God's Will, religiously carries on the functions of Generation, Operation, and Destruction— Creatively (as an index of Divine Immanence) and Mystically (as an index of Divine Transcendence). To enable the individual Soul to comprehend it in a fitful flash of self-realisation, the seeker must decode the message God has implanted in the deepest recesses of his Mind. Guru Nanak, as a Compassionate Prophet of Revelation, takes on *this* task as a Divine Assignment for the general weal of entire mankind.

Pauri-1

At the very first level (*pauri*), Guru Nanak approaches the problem with characteristic directness, daring, and (interactive) discourses. He demystifies the four major ways which the lesser saviours claim to be efficacious: (a) ceremonial piety through purification ablutions, (b) speech-fasting: (*maun vrat*) i.e., self-imposed silence, (c) gastric

fasting and over-indulgent acquisition, covering the entire gamut from sickening starvation to sumptuous satiation, and (d) proud pedantry, empty erudition, or winsome worldly-wisdom—or worse, the massive might of Metaphysics. Guru Nanak demystifies all the four categorically as superficial and misleading. And hastens to recover the disillusioned seeker from his shock of seeing everything (beliefs, myths, superstitions) demolished in one sure stroke—by posing the question himself: How to demolish the impregnable wall of illusion, how to be *sachiar*? In terms of the foregoing analysis, the term "truthful" means the four-fold preparedness of the seeker as a precondition to receive the Divine Grace: (a) purified, (b) quietened, (c) hungry (of food for the Soul), metaphorically, a heightened keenness of receptivity, with its attendant intensity and urgency, and (d) self-surrender as a the highest form of metaphysical machinations.

The stated question the Guru answers with the same alacrity with which he posed it. This point must be noted with utmost care, for in it lies Guru Nanak's supreme distinction as a Prophet of Humankind, notably, the helpless, hopeless, hapless Masses—whose life is one unbearable heartache of an interminable exploitation by the high and mighty of human society. Since he launches his Creative Mysticism by a daring and direct denial of the prevalent superficial and misleading ways of Salvation, or unfulfilled promises of a better life at an unknown time and place, I am convinced that Guru Nanak's Bani is most certainly none of these things: Myth/Mythology, Metaphysics, (mere) Poetry (the Muse), self-promoting Prophecy, rehashed Yoga, a precept/percept intended to beguile, or a subtle way of Proselytization.

The disarming simplicity of his six-word answer should lend absolute credence to the point underscored: *Hukami razai(n) chalna*, *Nanak, likkhya naal.* God's Inviolable Writ is lodged within the seeker's Mind for ready guidance and obedience. The operative principle of his (Inscrutable) Will (*raza*) is the Edict-Fiat (*Hukam*) whereby the Path of Truth is fore-ordained for the seeker. And since this *Hukam*, which the seeker must unconditionally, willingly, and happily obey through thick and thin, lies within his own heart, he cannot/need not be beguiled or misled—unless he himself lets go under the exigencies of utmost privation or Ego-directed pursuit of ambition and carnal pleasures.

The word '*naal*' has another implication: this *Hukam* is enunciated as follows: (i.e., in the next *pauri*). It seems to be quite the case because Guru Nanak, sticking to his characteristic clarity, purity, probity, and directness, is guiding the seeker step by step through his Ascent to the Realm of the Spirit. And, the next step, indeed, speaks exclusively and exhaustively of *Hukam*, God's Edict-Fiat.

Pauri-2

As stated before, God's Edict-Fiat is the Operative Principle of His (Inscrutable) Will. The two are not the same, as several scholars have tended to confuse. Will is Fundamental, the First Cause as applicable to God's Own Self-Existence (*Saibham*)—and its extension into Infinite-Eternal Progression as discernible in All Creation, right from the moment. He desires to make known his Transcendence (*Nirgun* state) as His Immanence (*Sargun* state).

All forms, all creatures come into being, honour conferred, lowliness begotten, sorrow and happiness received—by His Edict-Fiat. In one case, It bestows Grace; in another, the eternal cycle of births and deaths.

Before proceeding further, let me highlight the full spectrum of values, covered by Guru Nanak at Pauri-2, discernible in all creation: truth (*bakhsis*: the aim of all metaphysical quest), Beauty (*vadiai*: the splendour and prestige of position and status), Goodness (*uttam/neech*: the desideratum of virtue and vice in terms of placement in the social hierarchy), and Utility (*dukh/sukh*: the index of material well being). Different branches of philosophy are supposed to deal with the foregoing universal values: Metaphysics (Truth), Aesthetic (Beauty), Ethics (Goodness) and Karl Marx's dialectic materialism (Utility: a value ushered in by the cult of consumerism, or worse, as in the case of America, the culture of Conspicuous (euphemism for vulgar) Consumption, stylised as Throw-Away Civilisation! Therefore, the Timeless-Universal validity-probity-applicability of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism should be obvious.

He rounds up his discourse by emphasising that "All that exists falls within the jurisdiction of God's Edict-Fiat—without any exception whatsoever!"

And he closes Pauri-2 by his characteristic self-illuminating, test-ityourself, hint for the seeker whereby he not only can discern the All-Inclusive Nature and Scope of God's Edict-Fiat but also see for himself if he has correctly and fully imbibed it:

"Nanak Hukamai je bujhai to haumai kahai na koi".

One who knows His Edict-Fiat (as hereto revealed) will never indulge in the life-wasting sport of *I-am-ness* (or Ego, the word popularised by Sigmund Freud, Father of Modern Psychology).

The inference of Pauri-2 is that All Creation is the expression of God's Edict-Fiat and that total Law and Order (as against Lawlessness and Chaos or Disorder) prevails through it, Eternally and Infinitely. The one, who knows (and has imbibed) this Truth, lives in utmost Humility in God's Immeasurable Grand Scheme of Things.

Humility (not hypocritical, but honest to the core) is one of the most important Cardinal Principles of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism—and indispensable to the life of a Sikh. This aspect will be dealt with later in the present discussion. Let me first dilate upon the term "Humility". Humility is not an antonym of "Ego", at least for the purpose of the present study. It is a weaning of the Mind from a life of Objective Reality replete with temptations, allurements, inducements, and incentives which, at best, fuel the fire of carnal craving and end up in a self-consuming (bodily) catastrophe. The Way of Humility is to *reorient* the Mind to a life of Subjective Reality (ever-deepening inwardness) in the pursuit of Spiritual Sovereignty of the Self. But Humility is a curious culture. When one knows one is humble, one is most certainly *not* humble. One is vain. *In which case, outward humility is often exploited as a guile for personal advantage!* Should that be the case [which it usually is], it would decidedly be better to resort to Honest Arrogance. At least, it is guilelessly forthright—and can thus never swindle anyone!

"Ego" is "I" or "Self"—that which is conscious, and "Egoity" the faculty of consciousness and the ability to think—is the essential element of the Ego. By denying it, or worse destroying it, one would lose that by which human beings are distinguished from Plants (which have only life, but no sentience) and Animals (which have life as well as sentience, but no consciousness, at least of the kind to be arrogant and cunning). Human beings have life and sentience as well as consciousness. It is well-nigh impossible to define Ego. But I have come upon one definition after years of contemplation, supported/ substantiated by empirical observation. Ego is Body-Consciousness. I think I am the "Body". But the Truth is that the "Body" is mutable. In that case, how can I continue my evolution to a fuller, deeper, broader, and higher life, if I am destroyed with the Body. Thus, reorienting (an Architectural activity) the egoity from outward (i.e., the Body) to the inside (i.e., the Soul), the Ego itself is transformed into Humility.

In fact, the Ego regains its pristine glory in Humility in the light of the fact that "The Body is mine, *not* I the Body's!" In modern scientific parlance, Humility is the superconductor (i.e., it offers no or little resistance, thereby causing no or little losses during the transmission of electricity) of Psych-Spiritual Energy from The Source (or the Over-Self) to the Self; making it a live-wire bundle of electrifying enthusiasm, the élan vital of life. It should be obvious that true saints practising Creative Mysticism cannot even be touched by the high and mighty except by the Spiritual Engineers, the Devotees, living a life ordained by God's Edict-Fiat.

Some people object to Humility as being a doormat. My answer to this objection is Architectural. Body, being the Temple of Soul, deserves neat and tidy interiors. Good that it lets strangers of thoughts scrub their dirty feet on the doormat before they enter the inside (the Mind). It will keep the inside of the Building—uncontaminated and hygienic. Guru Nanak underscores this basic Truth in his inimitable Creative Mysticism: "Suchch hove taan sachch paiye": Purity is a precondition for the attainment of probity. In the light of the foregoing analysis, it is more than clear that this purity is *not* ablutionary cleanliness or ceremonial piety. It, indeed, is Humility: consciousness cleansed of egoity—through incineration by *Naam*-contemplation (*Japu*).

Pauri-3

At this level Guru Nanak reveals that God's Edict-Fiat becomes known to all and sundry in a staggering variety of ways. And they mutely sing panegyrics to His Infinite-Eternal Graces according to their individual understanding, as an expression of their own endowments. The high and mighty sing of His Might. The bounteous of His Bounties sing: the virtuous of His Virtues; the wise of His Omniscience; others of His Powers of Creation, Preservation and Destruction; several of His Transcendence; many of His Immanence sing forever. And yet if these praises be extended countless times, one could not exhaust His Attributes. The takers tire of taking, over inordinate aeons of Time, yet the Benefactor continues giving of His Infinite Benevolence, Eternally. His Edict-Fiat autonomously separates His Divine Dispensation, and, forever carefree, He views in Sublime Bliss His Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression.

Guru Nanak captures in his Creative Mysticism another of God's Cardinal Principles by which He operates throughout His Attributes Immanence (*Sargun* state): Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression, Infinite-Eternal.

Pauri-4

Guru Nanak stresses and reiterates, at this level, that True is the Master, True His Justice. We continually crave of His Dispensation, and His Bounties freely flow. But the most persistent, and insatiable, craving is to see Our Maker, The Monarch of Our Lives. And the Guru, in his characteristic method of Discourse, poses the moot question (as he did in the first *pauri*): "What offertory service must we perform to have a glimpse of the Divine Court? What prayer must we offer to merit His Sublime Love?" And, as he did before, the merciful Guru hastens to answer the piquant question himself: "Let us, in the ambrosia-filled hours of pre-dawn, meditate on the majestic glory of The True One's Name."

In his continued sharing of the secret and mystery revealed to him, Guru Nanak, through Creative Mysticism, disentangles the two questions of "Good Life" and "Salvation", of existential significance to all human beings. Good deeds can (and do) beget "Good Life" i.e., life of virtuous fulfilment, but not "Salvation". Salvation can be earned only by God's Grace. The metaphor, in the first case, is vesture, the Body, which the soul must "wear" through its endless evolution to a fuller, deeper, broader, and higher life-birth after birth. "Mokh Dwar" is the metaphor for Salvation, the door of Mukti, which can be entered only if God so Wills. The prevalent four methods, discountenanced in the first pauri, are rejected again, by implicit reiteration. To my knowledge, no other religious leader has stated the problem of Salvation (and its solution) with such disarming simplicity, crystal clarity, unswerving conviction, and creative consistency. By doing so, Guru Nanak subtly underscores the invaluable virtue of Humility when he proclaims: "Nanak evai(n) janai *sabh(u)aape sa(ch)chiar(u).*" "Nanak, let it thus be known that the True One is All-in-All (in Himself, by Himself, for Himself)."

Pauri-5

In view of the Inscrutability of Divine Will and God's Infinite-Eternal (i.e., Ineffable) Immanence—reaffirmed and reiterated in Pauri-4, Guru Nanak goes on to demonstrate the futility of human "thought, word, and deed" to comprehend Him in any way whatsoever. And he makes a succinct comment on idolatry: "He can neither be installed nor His likeness ever shaped"—Why? Because, in truth, "Untainted Formless, Self-Existent is He."

At this point, I would like to highlight Guru Nanak's distinctive (even matchless) civility and refinement of discourse with the following historical (not mythical) example.

Idolatry has been Hinduism's mainstay. In sharp contrast, Iconoclasm is Islam's fundamental tenet. The Muslims, in pursuit of this principle, razed hundreds of Hindu temples, idols and icons as invaders-rulers of Hindustan saying that they were *but-shikan* (idolbreakers), not *but-prast* (idol-worshippers). Desecration was their way of

saying (in barbaric, brutal terms) what Guru Nanak has proclaimed (not merely said/stated) in such a civilised way. Because God's likeness can never be shaped under any circumstances, by anyone whosoever, where is the question either of "making" His idol (*but*) or of "breaking" it. *Untainted is He, in Formless Self-Existence—Infinitely, Eternally.*

But the Guru hastens to commend a form of Worship peculiar to his Creative Mysticism. Serving, not merely worshipping (i.e., lipservice) Him, only avails that He may bestow honour on the devotee. God is the Repository of all virtues. Extol Him; hear and sing of His Glories; and let the heart brim with love for Him. Thus shall all misery depart, leaving the heart an abode of happiness.

Because all this transfiguration cannot occur naturally, Guru Nanak introduces the Guru, the Spiritual Preceptor, to guide the seeker in the why's and wherefore's of Worship. Extolling the Guru's Word, he says it is supernal symphony, the loftiest scripture, and all-pervasive, for God's Own Will abides in it. The "Guru" embodies all the traits of Isar, Gorakh, and the Mother Goddess. Having said so much, Guru Nanak once again underscores his Humility: "If His Quintessence were I to realise/How would I utter it/By what power would I sketch it? Thus has my master confided in me: He alone is the Provider of all—Never must I remain oblivious of Him".

Pauri-6

Guru Nanak discountenances here the ritual bathing at holy places (Hindu *tirathas*), because all this would not avail in the seeker's Spiritual Pilgrimage without God's express Approval. Throughout God's entire creation, the Guru says he sees, there is absolutely nobody who finds fulfilment except by His Grace. And he reminds the seeker that, within his own spirit, God has lodged the most precious of gems and rubies, which the Guru's Word may unravel to him. The concluding lines of the previous *pauri* are used again as a poetic refrain to reiterate the overriding virtue of Divine Contemplation.

Realising that the solution of a problem lies in the nature of the problem itself, Guru Nanak points to the seeker the indispensability of an inner life. The fulfilment he is deluded into seeking in material well-being is offset by the treasure trove that his Mind itself bears, albeit without his knowledge!

Pauri-7

Slowly and steadily, Guru Nanak is taking up others issues like inordinately-long life, the prestige and power of sceptre and crown and exposing their worthlessness for want of God's Grace, the heady euphoria of Mammon notwithstanding. So he says, even if one's longevity be ten times the duration of four yugas (Hindu Mythological very long periods of time = 43, 20, 000 years), even if one be known in all the nine continents, commanding universal following, and fame and praise from all mankind—all this will come to grief without God's Grace. And one would be treated as the most insignificant of worms, with the very reprobates pointing accusing fingers at him!

The Guru is underscoring the inviolability of Monotheism, time and again, though in a different metaphor, by insisting on the Truth revealed to him that God alone confers merit on those lacking it, and it is impossible to visualise or see anyone else who may bestow any virtue on Him.

Pauri-8

The next four *Pauris* from 8 to 11 are devoted to the virtues and fruits of hearkening (and taking to heart) the Holy Word. At this level, Guru Nanak elucidates them as follows: attaining to the state of *siddhas* (Hindu claimants of supernatural powers), *Pirs* (Muslim spiritual preceptors), god, and supreme *yogis* (Yoga Masters) unravelling of the mysteries of Earth, the Bull (Earth's prop in Hindu Mythology), and Sky; cosmic secrets of isles, regions, and nether worlds—above all, immunity against Death. The concluding couplet, which is poetic refrain repeated in the three *Pauris*, assures the seeker that God's devotees are forever in bliss because their suffering and sin are annulled by hearkening (and imbibing) the Holy Word.

Pauri-9

The list of advantages is expanded to include: exaltation to the state of Shiva, Brahma, and Indra (in Hindu Mythology, Destroyer, Creator of the Trinity, and Prince of Gods, respectively); acquisition of praiseworthy qualities; knowledge of esoteric powers of personality; and attainment of scriptural wisdom.

Pauri-10

Further gains are stated as: attainment of truthfulness contentment and spiritual illumination; the merit of bathing at sixty-eight holy places (Hindu *tirathas*); conferment of academic honours; and the spontaneous fixing of the Mind in meditation.

Pauri-11

The innumerable gains of hearkening (and imbibing) the Holy Word are concluded thus: knowledge of deep spiritual truths; supreme holiness compounded of a *sheikh's* (Muslim clergy) wisdom, innumerable virtues, and a sovereign's might; even the spiritually-blind find their path; and the unfathomed deeps yield their inaccessible secrets.

The inference of these four *Pauris* is that one must heed the Holy Word in all its Spiritual (*not* Metaphysical) ramifications until *it* is fully absorbed in one's soul-consciousness (*Surat*) whereby one's way and view of life becomes God-oriented. For such is the index of *Sahj* (unconditioned spontaneity) whereby "thought, word, and deed" are purified, preparatory to the Soul's reabsorption in The Source: The One God, as The First Cause, and Its Ultimate Effect.

Pauri-12

From the preceding four steps of *suniai* (hearkening and imbibing the Holy Word), Guru Nanak takes the seeker further up for an exposure to the realm of Belief as the bedrock of Edifice of Spiritual Life. The following four *Pauris* 12 to 15 deal with *manne/mannai*, taken to mean by different expositors "reflection" (on the Holy Word). Their interpretation

seems to be based on the three initial steps—*Sravana, manana* and *nidhyasan*—recognised as indispensable in the traditional Indian Theological system for inculcating spiritual discipline, "Manana" thus can mean one of the three or all the three: believing, obeying, reflecting. In my view, all the three meanings are simultaneously intended. This is why Guru Nanak has repeatedly placed high premium on the seeker as an individual human person responsible and accountable himself for all his acts of omission and commission. This being so, blind faith is hardly the belief the Guru would ever commend. Therefore, *manne/mannai* means believing after putting the idea to the intellectual rigours of deep reflection (*vichar*), and thence obeying it as God's Edict-Fiat (*Hukam*) so that all actions that spring from, and are regulated by, such believing-reflecting-obeying are spontaneously sanctified by connection with The Source, that is Perennially Pure—and beyond contamination by anyone, any means, whatsoever.

My preference is for the term "Faith-Fixed", which I have coined for usage in the exposition of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism. It may be conceded that the "Faith" so "Fixed" in God's Grace can *never* be blind (i.e., undiscerning). Only it *sees* with the eyes of innocence and Humility, and takes all risks (and, by reward, pleasure) in living a life of service, sacrifice, and surrender.

By virtue of their placement on the higher levels of the Edifice of Spiritual Life, the Faith-Fixed are superior to those at the preceding four *Pauris*. This Guru Nanak underscores with great punch in the opening statement of Pauri-12: "Ineffable is the stature of the Faith-Fixed. Whoever attempts to size it up must in the end regret his vanity." The following lines reaffirm and reiterate this proclamation: "No pen, no paper, no scribe's skill could ever do full justice to that sublime stature."

The concluding couplet is once again a poetic refrain repeated at the end of each of the following three *Pauris*. Here goes: "So immaculate is the Quintessence of God's Name that only the seeker, whose Mind in Faith is Firm-Fixed, can ever realize it."

God as truth is Unattributive Transcendence (*nirgun*) i.e., Self-Existent (*saibhang*) when He needs no Epithet or Nomenclature. But

as *sargun* i.e., in a state of Attributive Immanence, He must have One. Otherwise, how could Man ever address Him. Although, in the *Mul Mantra*, Guru Nanak has mentioned several Attributes whereby God may be addressed, in the delineation of his Bani subsequently, he has fixed "Naam" or "Name" as God's Epithet or Nomenclature. Once again, Guru Nanak's unique Creative Mysticism comes to the fore offering a simple solution for what seems to be an irresolvable paradox. The word "Name" has several connotations: that by which a person or a thing is known or called: a designation: reputation: fame: a celebrity: family or clan: authority: assumed character. It is this impressive array of possible meanings that "Name" is the most appropriate "Name" for God's self-assumed character i.e., His Attributive Immanence. The simplification, which Guru Nanak repeatedly adopts to state the most esoteric in common intelligible idiom, is especially noteworthy.

Pauri-13

Guru Nanak exposes the seeker to other realms of Spiritual Ascent. Says he: the Soul consciousness and Mind of the Faith-Fixed are awakened, and all the stages of enlightenment opened onto him, neither does he receive any buffets in afterlife, nor is he stricken by the terror of the Angel of Death...

Pauri-14

Further endowments of Divine Grace are here enumerated: the Faith-Fixed meets no obstacle on the path of Salvation, and he advances Godward universally acclaimed, never straying into the blind alleys of sects and cults, for *Dharma* (the Cosmic Moral Law) is his unshakable prop...

It must be noted that Guru Nanak here is categorical in proclaiming a Faith founded on The Cosmic Moral Law. His is, therefore, not a Religion in the narrow sense of sectarianism, communalism, and denominationalism. This is why he did not at all feel the need to proselytize—to convert, to wean seekers from their own existing faiths. *Dharma* is the most Catholic, because it is the Timeless-Universal God-Ordained Cosmic Moral Law. It transcends ethnicity, socio-political boundaries, and national exclusiveness. This is the grandest endowment of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism to the entire Family of Man, Fathered by *Ik Oankar*. Hence, the soulful salutation-cum-prayer: *Guru Nanak Naam Charhdi Kala, Tere Bhaane Sarbat Da Bhala*, which has a universal applicability, appeal, and advantage. By the Power of the Holy Name, let spirits be forever in the Ascendant, and, by Divine dispensation, let general weal prevail.

Pauri-15

The Faith-Fixed assuredly finds salvation, his kith and kin are liberated too, the power of Faith liberates both the preceptor and the disciple—above all, the Faith-Fixed does not have to go a-begging...

The psycho-spiritual Energy, which is released by fixing the Faith in Naam, has an electro-magnetic field akin to electricity. It affects the Agent as much as it does those surrounding him. And it works, without discriminating, to the benefit of preceptor and disciple alike in a manner no other system, however rigorous, may ever do.

Guru Nanak in the use of his Creative Mysticism, for the general weal of the world at large, once again introduces a simple test to set the Faith-Fixed apart from charlatans of all genres. The one who has his Faith firm-Fixed on the Name is no longer a beggar. He is a benefactor of Humankind. Through a highly-civilised Discourse, Guru Nanak categorically disapproves the life of mendicants, ascetics, fakirs. By implication, they are an unsavoury burden on human society besides their fruitless self-indulgence in pseudo-spiritualism. While exploiting the gullible, they actually mislead them. Also, noteworthy is Guru Nanak's reaffirmation and reiteration of his fundamental tenet: That God-Oriented Souls attain to a state of spiritual sovereignty and self-sufficiency—the point of Purity and Probity from where their Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression flows spontaneously into Socially-Beneficent Action.

The poetic refrain at the end of each of the four *Pauris*: "So immaculate is the quintessence of God's Name that only the seeker, whose Mind in Faith is firm-Fixed, can realise It", is a remarkable

delineation of the Path of Self-Realisation in the simplest of terms. It warns the seeker against straying into blind alleys of sects, cults, and other prevalent secretive methods of professed salvation!

Pauri-16

In this *pauri*, Guru Nanak is using one of his favourite tools of discourse for maintaining the creative continuity of the fundamentals of his Creative Mysticism enunciated by him in the preceding *Pauris*. These are followed by the introduction of a new subject: Cosmogony (literally, a theory or a myth of the origin of the Universe) wherein he takes up (and completely explodes) the prevalent Myth(s). This technique is akin to a run-on line in the couplet of a poem [e.g., Let me not to the marriage of true minds/admit impediments... Shakespeare in one of his sonnets]—the first line, or hemistich, completes its sense only by the two following words which run on into the second line of the couplet: "admit impediments". As will be shown subsequently, Guru Nanak uses this method with great efficacy and repeatedly so, for that precise reason.

Let us revert to the summary part of Pauri-16. The five elect (*Panch Parwan*) are those whose attributes have been enumerated in the previous *Pauris*, as representing five different classes of devotional Creative Mysticism with the selfsame Source: (a) Those who abide by (and imbibe) God's Edict-Fiat (*pauri one*); (b) Those who reflect on the majestic glory of the True One's Name; (c) Those who never remain oblivious of Him; (d) Those who hearken (and take to heart) the Holy Word; and (e) Those whose Faith is firm-Fixed after deep and persistent Reflection. Hence "the Elect" are the true Spiritual Representatives of God who have attained to this state by the rigorous Yoga of *Naam*-Absorption and bear the stamp of Divine Approval. Significantly, here the Guru is introducing the sublime structure of a unique *Panchayati Raj*: A form of self-governance by people's own elected representatives according to the dictates of an unwritten constitution upheld by *Dharma*, The Cosmic Moral Law.

Their number comes to 5, rather mystically—which has come to acquire an inviolable Ethical Authority in the Sikh culture milieu

and spiritual tradition. Therefore, the conventional meaning of the word *panch*, as symbolizing "the elders of a clan, tribe or fraternity", has come to stay—as is doubtlessly corroborated by the adage: *panjaan vichch parmesar* [God Himself presides where five good-intentioned persons get together].

The literal meanings of the lines relating to the foregoing subject at Pauri-16 are: Those approved of Him are God's (Five) Elect, honoured among fellow human-beings, exalted they abide in His Sublime Presence—and welcome are they at the Divine Portals. Though they are Five, they are in spirit One, for their Guru is the One Common Source: meditation fixed on The One i.e., *Ik* (*Oankar*).

If one were to speculate the Creator's Infinite-Eternal Estate, one shall find It above count and competition even after the deepest Reflection.

And, now Guru Nanak, moves on to take up the question of Cosmogony.

Of Compassion is born the Bull of *Dharma* that holds the Universe by the strings of Contentment. One who realises this Truth is instantly enlightened and knows that the Mythical Bull (of Hindu Mythology) cannot carry the enormous loads of the world.

Note, how Guru Nanak completely explodes the prevalent Myth of a mere Bull supporting the Earth on its horns—with characteristic finality, and utmost clarity, which is a hallmark of his Creative Mysticism. And he goes on to show why?

Earths are there beyond this globe, and yonder there more and more—what Power holds all these worlds aloft. Surely, a mere Bull cannot It be, for the Bull must need another earth to stand on for carrying the burden of *this* one.

Here, I would like to reiterate what is my essential thesis: Guru Nanak's Bani is neither Mythology, nor Metaphysics, not even Poetry (the Muse)—nor mere Mysticism or Creativity treated as be-all and end-all of intellectual and/or psycho-emotional pastime.

Mythology is a body of Myths i.e., commonly-held beliefs that are untrue or without foundation. Metaphysics, with its characteristic addiction to far-fetched conceits, is largely speculative. Poetry (the Muse) is a metamorphosis of figments of imagination into make-believe imagery.
Mysticism in its esoteric withdrawnness is an alienation from the mainstream of life. Creativity, practised as an end-in-itself, is sociallyalienated self-indulgence. All these in their imbalanced pursuits end up as *Mythomania*: a psychiatric condition in which one beings compulsively lying or exaggerating to an abnormal extent. Against this background, it should be easy to grasp the distinctiveness of Guru Nanak's unique approach.

By virtue of his Creative Mysticism, he actually *sees* (as palpably as he sees you and I) what's happening in the Universe. When he asks in the act of exploding the Myth "Where is the Mythical Bull standing when, in the vast emptiness of Space, countless worlds twirl about— unsupported? He is posing the question on the basis of a firsthand empirical observation which he himself makes. Nobody—absolutely nobody anywhere in the world—has proclaimed the Truth in such categorical and convincing terms, in the 15th century! *Does one still need a proof of the Guru's unique Revelation?*

Let me dilate upon this issue a little more. The advent of Guru Nanak was the time of Renaissance in Europe when discoveries, which would change (and have since changed) the world, were being made in plenty. Suffice it to mention only two: Columbus discovered America (in his search for India), and Copernicus announced that *The Universe was not geocentric* i.e., the Earth was not the centre of the Universe, thereby exploding the Myth of this planet's unchallengeable doctrinaire importance. In brief, both the Oriental and the Occidental Minds were wallowing in the cesspool of superstitions, myths, caste discrimination, colour prejudices, and racial narrow-mindedness.

To proclaim a Faith of the kind that Guru Nanak did was a magnificent turning-point in the history of human civilisation. With his Creative Mysticism, he ushered in a world of Perennial Modernity—rescued from the inhumanity of soul-stifling dogmas, mind-boggling doctrines, life-alienating "isms", and misleading ideologies. He wrote a Charter of Human Right—dauntless in its daring, refreshing in its rationalism, holistic in its humanism, divine in its spirit, and unageing in its form. Such Human Rights as: the right to live and work with dignity and honour; the right to think for oneself; the right to feel for

others; and the right to worship The One Eternal-Immutable God, Our Sole Maker, Provider, Destroyer—were, and still are, unprecedented.

Let me now revert to Pauri-16, the remaining part of this *pauri*, which is a crucial resting-spot in the Magnificent Edifice of the Japuji. The Lord God has scribed with His ever-moving pen creatures of myriad shapes and hues, whose staggering account can never be computed. None can ever say how limitless are His powers, how superb His forms, how boundless His boundaries. His One Word created the Cosmic Expanse (akin to the Big Bang theory) and myriad streams of Life ran in. And the Guru, in a Trance of Wonder, asks The Almighty Father: "What worth have I to even attempt contemplating the miracle of Thy Omnipotence, O Lord?" And in spontaneous self-surrender, he concedes: "Too unworthy am I even once to be made a sacrifice unto You. Whatever pleases You is always an Act of Grace; You are Eternal-Immutable, O Formless One!"

Pauri-17

Pauris 17 to 19 are devoted to the explication of the vastness and diversity of God's Creation. At this level, and the next two, Guru Nanak enables the seeker to have a glimpse of numberless good and pious souls on Earth, juxtaposing them with numberless sinners and savages who infest the globe. Why the Merciful Lord suffers and sustains the latter species, and how indulgent He is to creatures of diverse types, is deeply ingrained in the Inscrutability of His Will. In his characteristics Humility, Guru Nanak accepts this Mystery with loving adoration.

He paints a vast Canvas of pulsating Simultaneity and Expanding Infinity in awesome detail, amazing colours, and sprightly textures. In this, and many other respects, Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is truly exceptional.

Says he, Countless are the prayer-chants, forms of devotion, and worship, modes of penance; and innumerable are those who from memory recite the Scriptures, ascetics who have renounced the world, devotees contemplating God's Attributes, and seeking illumination; myriads are those dispensing charity, crusaders, braving the enemy's steely blows, and those in uninterrupted meditation on vows of silence. And having shown so staggering a panorama of human life on Earth Guru Nanak retreats into Humility, conceding his inability to carry on, and confronts His Creator, in self-surrender: "Too unworthy am I even once to be made a sacrifice unto You... Whatever pleases You is an Act of Grace; You are Eternal-Immutable, O Formless One!" The concluding lines are a poetic refrain taken from the preceding pauri-and also have been repeated in the next two Pauris. This is Guru Nanak's charming way of driving home a subtle but significant point. Recoiling verse such as this sets his Creative Mysticism apart in a class by itself. In its rhythmic reiteration, it directs its appeal (as against dogmatic or doctrinaire imposition) to human reason, and persuades the seeker into a willing heart-to-heart dialogue with Divinity. Also, it underlines Guru Nanak's way of repeatedly returning to The Source for replenishment of psycho-spiritual Energy through a Mystical-Completed Creative Circuit.

Pauri-18

The explication, in its characteristic tenacity to capture the Immensity of Creation, continues in a gushing spring of Divine afflatus. Says the Guru: Countless are the purblind fools relapsed into folly, besides those living off others' flesh through thievery and dishonesty; the innumerable tyrants ruling by brute force, the impetuous cut-throats and merciless murderers, the abounding sinners leaving behind a trial of sin; numberless liers who only falsehood spread; perverts self-abased in filth; and a myriad slanders whose heads are burdened by others' calumny.

At this crucial point, Guru Nanak springs a pleasant surprise by which, in my considered opinion, he is exalted manifold as a Prophet of the Masses. His humility is, indeed, deep and genuine, as he tirelessly demonstrates. But this time, he calls himself *neech* (depraved and lowly) to expose his Will-Abiding Mind as an Eternally clean slate on which God can inscribe anything that pleases Him. Therefore, he emphasises, in no uncertain terms, that just because he is describing a world of sinners, it does not mean that he thinks himself to be above sinning an essential index of human fallibility. No world religious leader has spoken of himself so disparagingly!

Says he: "The sinner (or depraved/lowly) Nanak thus enumerates evil-doers as he understands them after thoughtful consideration." The Guru, here highlights another ethical virtue: restraint against glib impoliteness of speech, and the persistent need for Reflection in the process of "Thought, Word, and Deed" as a matter of Civilised Discourse. This everyone, as an individual human person, owes to himself as personal responsibility and moral accountability. This point already highlighted cannot be overemphasised.

Look, how beautifully the poetic refrain fits into the winding-up of the verse as a conclusive reiteration of Humility. Says Guru Nanak: "Too unworthy am I even once to be made a sacrifice unto you. Whatever pleases You is always an Act of Grace; You are Eternal-Immutable, O Formless One!"

Pauri-19

The theme of numberless persons, places, things, events, and activities has been brought forward to this concluding *pauri*.

Myriads are God's Names, numberless the Spaces created by Him, and inaccessible are countless Universes—but even to use the term "countless" is tantamount to carrying the burden of sin on one's head...

However, what is the way out of this predicament? Expressing his personal quandary, Guru Nanak beseeches (if implicitly, so as not to disturb either the flow or compactness of his God-directed narrative) the Almighty Father's permission to go ahead. Now, this is where the Guru draws upon Logic of the Awakened Soul to validate the indispensability of using "words" for communication even when the theme is so clearly inexpressible. *This departure in Discourses must be noted as it sets apart Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism from the fruitless ontological meanderings of mere Metaphysics.*

So, says he: "Yet words must be used to express God's truth, as also His praise; by words are His panegyrics sung, and His Attributes

deliberated upon; of words are scriptures made, and by words are these chanted, and by words is delineated the Way of Communion."

From this point onwards, Guru Nanak's verse changes from a linear narrative to a cyclic reiteration. This is something no Metaphysics, however erudite and esoteric, can ever hope to accomplish. The aesthetic resilience with which Guru Nanak turns about, and the artistic plasticity with which he shapes the Spiritual Circuitry, comprise the matchless merit of his Creative Mysticism.

And his Divine afflatus flows back to The Source when he does proclaiming thus: "Yet God, Who decrees them all, Himself transcends the Writ of words. To man comes only whatever He decrees. The entire Creation is His Manifest-Name. Nothing beyond His Name portends."

How must I contemplate and express Thy Omnipotence? "Too unworthy am I even once to be made a sacrifice unto You. Whatever pleases You is always an Act of Grace; You are Eternal –Immutable, O Formless One!"

Pauri-20

Having helped the seeker climb half-way up the Edifice of Truth, Guru Nanak reveals to him, at this level, the futility of ablutionary rituals. From now onwards, he will share the esoteric knowledge of Mindcleansing, for as he so convincingly shows all kinds of purificatory practices, however well-meaning and widely-accepted, are only skindeep. They may be a charming cosmetic for the Body, but do precious little to purify the Mind. Here, he coins the apt metaphor of washer man, washing, soap, and all. In his Creative Mysticism, he displays an unparalleled genius for utmost simplification. Here goes: "Grimesmeared hands, feet and body may be cleaned with water; (similarly) soiled clothes may be washed with soap; but the Mind defiled by sin and evil can be scrubbed clean only when Name's detergent performs the Divine miracle. Good and Evil are no mere words: each action is recorded for the after-life (on the following principle): As you sow so shall you reap-Nanak, God's Edict-Fiat regulates the process of transmigration."

The Divine Writ lodged within the human Soul is reaffirmed, and the seeker exhorted to grasp the Cosmic Moral Law (of Cause and Effect) that governs All Creation.

Pauri-21

From this *pauri* begins the exploration of other realms of the human spirit. Guru Nanak shows the seeker the futility of austerities and other religious practices, the fraudulent sense of achievement inherent in their performance notwithstanding. This is a crucial step in the Spiritual Ascent of the Self, for hearkening and imbibing (after due reflection and critical evaluation) the sacrosanctity of his Revelation, one would save lots of time, energy, and efforts by avoiding what are essentially infructuous pursuits.

At this level, the subjects dealt with are as follows: The merit of pilgrimage, ascetics, compassion, and charity is as insignificant as a sesame seed but he who hearkens and absorbs in his Mind the Divine message with loving adoration and Faith firm-Fixed takes a holy bath at the pilgrimage-centre within him thereby purifying his soul.

All virtues are Thine, O Lord; none within me abides—how could true devotion be achieved without cultivating noble qualities, in the first place. Salutations to Him—The Self-Existent One, Sole Architect of All Creation—Whose Form is Manifest-Word: Eternal, Holy, Beauteous, Ever Blissful!

The meaning of the four words which comprise the seventh line of the *pauri* is much involved: *suast(i), ath(i), bani, barmau*, giving rise to a host of exposition. Some of them are: (a) From the Self-Existent proceeded Maya (Spacio-Temporal Reality) whence issued the Word that produced Brahma (Creator in Hindu Trinity) and the rest; (b) O Primal Word, Maya, Brahma, Hail to Thee; (c) Salutations to Him, Creator of Maya, Whose Form is the Holy Word; (d) Hail to Thee! Let this praise of Thine through *Bani* be a salutation to Thee from me in the manner of a Brahmin.

Given my conditioning as an Architect, the reasons for the above translation should be obvious.

At any rate, Guru Nanak now proceeds to deal with a subject which religious leaders, priests, *Pandits*, and *Mullas* have speculated and debated for centuries—without reaching a consensus. The scientists themselves are divided on the question of Genesis.

At what hour, on which occasion, date and day, season and month did God bring forth All Creation? They would have recorded it in their Sacred Scriptures if the Brahmins had found the answer. Nor does the exegesis of the Holy Quran show that the Muslim divines ever knew it. The Yogi too does not know the date and day, season or month. The Lord God, who created the Cosmos, Alone knows the Mystery of the Genesis.

The charming way in which Guru Nanak explicates the case must be pointed out again. His is Logic of the Soul which beats all ratiocinative cerebration at its own game. How could anyone—just anyone (including the Scientists who, with their tenacious insistence on empirical observation, never accept anything without corroborative evidence) refute that neither the Brahmins (Hindu claimants of Brahma Gyan)— The Creator Brahma's Knowledge) nor the Muslim divines, not even the Yogis (proud proponents and practitioners of religious austerities) know the answer, for if anyone really knew his own holy book or sacred record would show the astronomical data concerning the Genesis.

Such forthright directness on Guru Nanak's part rendered/renders even the haughtiest of pedants speechless! Then, what is the big idea of wasting time, energy, and effort on fruitless Scriptural, Metaphysical, Mythical, and other disputations—except as armchair speculation for passing (more appropriately, killing) precious Time.

And, then, the Guru relapses—as is his wont—into the helplessness of the unknowing mind, and, in all Humanity, invokes His Grace for resolving the human predicament:

How may I address and how adore Him; How may I describe Him and how know Him—and the Guru, then, points out that Many, O Nanak, profess to know Him—each claiming to be wiser than the others.

Having reiterated God's Ineffable Quintessence, Guru Nanak concludes the *pauri* with a stroke of finality.

Supreme is the Lord, Sublime His Being—only thus far, O Nanak, I dare say: Just what He Wills comes to pass. And he who brags of omniscience shall never be welcome at God's Portals.

Pauri-22

In this *pauri*, Guru Nanak presents bewildering views of the Cosmic Expanse such as had not hitherto been even attempted. A reference to the fact that even Science knew precious little in the times of the Guru, the explication offered by him at this level is, indeed, revolutionary. It speaks volumes for the authenticity and magnificence of his Revelation, which is made of an altogether special stuff: Creative Mysticism wrought in the mint of the Soul, furnished, fuelled, and fired by Divine Grace.

God has created millions of nether worlds and the heavens above, and the wise have given up the accompt in despair. The Vedas (Hindu Scriptures) too declare their helplessness unanimously. The Semitic texts speak of eighteen thousand spheres. Vain is such count, for its touches not the fringe. To one Truth all of them point. That is, there could be count, yet His Infinity none may yet measure or state. No wonder, therefore, many lives have been swallowed (in the Vortex of Time and Space). For Nanak, suffice it to say: God is Supreme, and He Alone Knows His Stature Himself!

What a wondrous spectacle has Guru Nanak shown to the seeker at Pauri-22: a whirling of Matter a-twirl in Space-Time Continuum— Infinitely, Eternally! The Guru is now preparing the seeker for a mesmeric viewing of the Spectacular Panorama that he will presently unfold for his steadily-awakening Soul.

Pauri-23: The devotees' laudation of God, chanted repeatedly, cannot measure His Immensity. Unknowable is He like the ocean into which streams and rivers merge—without ever being able to size up its content. Mighty monarchs with dominions vaster than the seas, and mountains of riches beside, measure not to the merit of a tiny ant whose mind on God is ever fixed.

Guru Nanak, in this *pauri*, introduces another apt metaphor: the ocean and the stream, to enable the seeker to know that God is Unknowable, with regard to His Immensity and Glory. Moreover, nothing shall avail, not even the absolute might of monarchs, because mind cannot acquire God's Knowledge through sheer wilfulness. Just the same, if the seeker were as earnest as the tiny ant, his heart can certainly be a receptacle of Divine Grace. The implication is that, rather than waste time on vain attempts to know God's Grandeur, it is advisable to win His Love by an earnest choiceless (i.e., without any other motives) inner seeking. That is what, according to Guru Nanak, is the sole purpose of the Soul's human incarnation.

Pauri-24: Since God's Immensity is Unknowable, Guru Nanak carries forward the theme of Devotion, which is the only authentic and direct way of feeling His Grandeur in terms of Divine Grace. Such "Unknowability-and-the-Mind's-curiosity-to-know" syndrome an would strike the intellect-dependent Man as self-contradictory. But the difficulty presents itself only when one places more premium on the need to prove to another rather than on the urge to probe for oneself. To me, this is quite clearly a case of Egotism-the arrogance occasioned by "I"-making in the Workshop of Body-Conscious Mind. Guru Nanak, thus, commends the Path of Devotion (not mechanical cymbal-rattling-but Active Self-Surrender (prompted by the Existential Exigencies of Human Life) to seek God's Grace, the only sure way of earning for oneself the dear delight of discovering for oneself the Providential palpableness of Our Peerless Maker. Needless to say that this method cannot prove anything for anyone but yet give to the seeker a soul-stirring glimpse of God's Majesty and Mystery in a fitful flash of Self-Realisation. The verse reads as under:

Myriads are God's qualities, endless their count. Innumerable are His doings, and His Bounty. Infinite is what He sees and hears, Inscrutable His Design. Limitless is His Creation whose bounds are invisibly. Many yearn to know His Extent, yet it ever eludes them. Who knows His Limit? The more it is explained, the further it beggars description. God is the Supreme Master: Exalted is His Station—Supreme, above

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all, is His Name. Only someone endowed with as great a Stature as God Himself might reckon His Extent. In sooth, He alone knows how Great He is! Devotion to Him, Nanak, is a blessing that issues forth from His Own Glance of Grace.

Pauri-25: Continuing the theme of Divine Munificence, Guru Nanak shows here the Many-Splendouredness of God's Infinite Bounties. Here goes: God's abounding Grace beggars all description, the Benevolent Lord Himself expects no returns for what He so boundlessly gives. Myriads are the acclaimed heroes who beg at His doorstep, innumerable such others whose count is hard to keep, numerous are the fools in carnality languishing, numerous those ungrateful wretches who always receive yet deny, numerous the fools with greed stricken, to the lot of many falls endless suffering and penury—Bountiful Lord! This too must be accepted as Your Gift.

This is one of the profoundest sparks of Revelation in Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism. How could endless suffering and penury be also God's Valuable Benediction? The answer may baffle the intellect-dependent Man of Worldly Ambition. God bestows (not *inflicts*) suffering and penury on souls to give them a chance for taking recourse to Reflection (whose virtues he has earlier enumerated). The implication is that, when one is lost in the jungle, it does not at all help to frantically chase around. The Reasonable thing is to stop, reflect, assess, and know what step should be taken next to gain lost ground—the path that had been lost in a bog of disordered aimlessness. In other words, such a fateful opportunity of God's Gift for Man to retrace his steps from Worldly pursuits—and to (re)orient his Mind to the Magnetic Compass of Soul—Consciousness for his (*homeward*) voyage to *The Source* exists. The remaining verse reads as under:

The bondage in transmigration or liberation from it is effected as pleases Him, without anyone's intercession whatsoever. Were some reprobate to attempt divulging this Supreme Secret, bitter shame shall come his way. God alone knows what each one receives, and Himself dispenses it. But few ever confess to this underlying Truth. The Boon of His Adoration the Lord selectively bestows—and the fortunate beneficiary should be reckoned, Nanak, as the King of kings.

The value attached to unflinching devotion to God, as a rare Divine Grace, must be noted. Spiritual Exaltation is, indeed, the highest of riches anyone can aspire to (and receive) in this very human life.

Pauri-26: Guru Nanak in this *pauri* employs the metaphor of commerce to reinforce the seeker's Faith that the Creative Mysticism he is sharing is no other-worldly speculation. It is replete with the matter-of-factness of this world. This text reads: God's Attributes are invaluable, and so also is the Commerce in them. Blessed are the warehouses wherein these lie, and blessed their traders. Blessed are those who come to fetch them, and blessed who with His Bounties depart. Priceless is the gem of devotion to Him and priceless those merged in it. Invaluable is the Divine Justice, invaluable the Court dispensing it. Infallible are the scales of His Judgement and honorific those who with Grace acquit themselves. Priceless are His Bounties, and perfect the rank of quality on them. Infinite is God's Generosity, and priceless His commands.

Beyond words, Invaluable is all this evermore! Those who venture to express it are so absorbed as to be lost in ecstasy. The Vedic and Puranic texts tirelessly dwell on Him, and many a pedant makes erudite commentaries. Brahmas and Indras attempt [the Mythical milkmaids and the celestial cowherd], Shiva, and the Supreme Yogis, and also countless Buddhas created by God. Demons and deities pay obeisance to Him. Sages and Seers too adore Him. All attempt to utter His Greatness. Many hold learned discourses on Him, and others too venture evermore. Still more strive but leave the world, unsuccessful. If God were to create as many more to sing panegyrics to Him evermore—woefully off the mark would they yet be. His Stature is as Great as it pleases Him to assume. The True One Himself, O Nanak, knows His secrets. Mark him as the greatest of fools, who such knowledge arrogates to himself.

Guru Nanak leaves no doubt about the Immeasurability of God's Matchless Majesty, and, while commending the Path of Devotion, demonstrates that even this could not stand up to the impossible task of reckoning His Grandeur. As the First Cause, God reserves the Divine Right of assuming any stature that pleases His Will. The explication is that He is always Greater than the Sum Total of All That He Himself creates, strange though it may sound but I hold it to be true that this Unwritten Law of the whole begin greater than the sum of its parts applies in the human situation too. Man is always greater than what he does or has accomplished—because he carries in his Soul the Seed of Divinely-Designed Progression. In other words, Man is a Possibility that never quite becomes a Fact—in the ultimate and absolute sense of the word.

Pauri-27: In his untainted innocence, dyed in the Splendour of Godhood, Guru Nanak, here, expresses his profound sense of wonder when he childlike queries:

What is that Portal like, which edifice that Mansion resemblesenthroned, where God watches and sustains All Creation? Innumerable are the instruments, the melodies, the players who laud Him. Countless the musical modes and the symphonies, and the musicians orchestrating His panegyrics: Air, Water, Fire Laud Him; Dharamraja lauds Him at His Righteous Portal. Chitra Gupta lauds Him in keeping track of men's deeds for Dharamraja to reckon. Resplendent in the light given by Him, Shiva, Brahma, and Devi (Mother Goddess in Hindu Mythology) sing God's laudation. Indra seated on his throne and surrounded by deities, Yogis in Mystic-absorption, devotees in contemplation, men of continence, charity, poise, and indomitable heroes-all His praises chant. Age after age, all men of learning and mighty seers laud Him in holy texts. Ravishingly beauteous Fairies of heaven, earth, and the nether world laud Him. The jewels created by God laud Him, along with sixty-eight pilgrimage-centres. Heroes of supreme might and all the four modes of Creation sing of His praises. So also the regions, continents, and the entire Universe propped by His support. Only such are inspired to laud Him as win His pleasure: These be His devotees dyed in the joy of Him.

Numberless more beyond my reckoning supplicate to God, says Nanak.

By painting such a glorious picture of God's Incredible Immensity and His countless adorers, eulogisers, Guru Nanak leaves the seeker gasping for breath at the Infinite-Eternal Spectacle. And he himself quietly takes recourse to self-surrender to complete the Celestial Circuit between the Self and The Source.

The remaining part of the verse reads as follows: You are Eternal, O Lord of the Universe, ever True is Your Name. You, who have created this Universe, are, have ever been, and shall evermore be (true). Having created beings of diverse species and shades, you look after your Handiwork, as flowing from Your Own Grace. Whatever places You comes to pass, none can command You, O Lord; You are King of kings. May You Will always be my life's mainstay!

Two salient points should be noted in the foregoing part of the verse. One, Guru Nanak has drawn the seeker's attention to the prologue of the Japuji: Truth was He before Time was born; Truth was He when Time began to run its course; Truth is He even now; and Truth shall He be evermore. In the above verse, the phrasing is slightly different, though: You, Who have created this Universe, are, have ever been, and shall evermore be (true). This is a very distinguished feature of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, as has repeatedly been pointed out in the present exposition. Since it is not Metaphysics, the Guru is not lost in ontological meanderings or ratiocinative cerebration. Nor does his imagination ever come amiss because he is *not* making new Myths. This is not even an exclusive lifealienated Mysticism which ends up in blind alleys. Much less is it mere Creativity indulged in for the sake of sensuous self-gratification.

The second point brings out the Quintessence of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism. Continual remembrance of the Holy Father is the Soul's staple diet. Just as the Body subsists on what it is materially fed—regularly, the human soul also needs to be fed. Only its food is different. It is a feeding by way of replenishment of Psycho-Spiritual Energy by repeatedly returning to The Source, much in the manner of an Electrical Circuit. Elsewhere, the Guru has proclaimed this truth employing the Metaphor of food (i.e., in this case, Spiritual Diet): I hunger after the True Name. Remembering I live; forgetting I die (i.e., my soul shrivels and decays) aakhaan jeevaan, visarai mar jaon, (SGGS, p. 349).

Pauri-28: In this pauri, Guru Nanak takes on the Yogis, Hindu ascetics, who practise the Yoga system, consisting in the withdrawal of the senses from external objects and entailing long continuance in unnatural postures, tedious breathing techniques, etc. Yoga (from, Sanskrit, meaning union) is a system of Hindu philosophy developed by Patanjali (*Floruit*/flourished 2nd century BCE or 5th century CE), showing the means of emancipation of the soul from further transmigrations/ incarnations, and union with the Supreme Being. It purports to cultivate strict physical and mental discipline and mental discipline by means of which such emancipation is attained. Having shown that Ik Oankar, The Eternal-Immutable Sole Creator of the Universe, is beyond the reach and grasp of any system whatsoever, Guru Nanak, here, exposes the Yogis' hypocrisy of made-up physical appearances in which they hide their impure inner lives. And, then, as is truly exceptional of his Creative Mysticism, the Guru offers an apt alternative by transforming the yogic paraphernalia into a metaphor of metamorphosis.

Guru Nanak devotes four *Pauris*, (28-31) to explicate the theme of transformation of the ritual austerities of Yoga into the ethical-spiritual qualities worthy of attainment by a genuine seeker. The verse reads as under:

Let contentment by the earrings Modest your begging-bowl and pouch Smear your Mind with the ashes of contemplation From realisation of mortality, fashion your quilt And keep your mortal frame virgin-chaste Let Faith firm-Fixed in God be your code and staff Make the Brotherhood of Man your Yogic sect Thus gaining victory over *your* self May you conquer the whole world Salutations to the Primal Lord, Who Through all Time ever remains Immaculate, Eternal, Immortal Attired in Immutability Guru Nanak has stressed, with great punch, yet gentle persuasion, the plenipotency and plenitude of Universal Love, against the weird practices of certain Yogic sects, as infallible means of emancipation. His tenacious insistence in defence of an inner life of the Spirit, grounded in ethical conduct during workaday existence, should be carefully noted.

The propriety and probity of the Divine Model—Lord God Himself have been emphasised in the concluding couplet, which is repeated as a poetic refrain in all the four *Pauris*. That Guru Nanak never fails to complete the Intangible Circuit of Spiritual Energy that must constantly flow between The Source and the Seeker—*via* the Guru.

Pauri-29: Acquisition of occult powers to perform miracles was deemed to be the exclusive object of prolonged prayers and self-mortifying penances by Naths and Yogis. Guru Nanak categorically disapproves of them as ignoble, impious, and vainglorious exercise, diverting Man as they do from his life's true goal, which he is seeking, in all Humility: Communion with God.

The present *pauri* deals with the stated theme, and the verse reads as under:

Let enlightenment be your diet, compassion the dispenser Let in each heart divine Melody reverberate God is the True Master It is He who holds sway over the whole Universe Misguided ambition prompts the desire For miraculous powers The universal system is regulated by The twin-principles of union and separation To Man's share falls what is destined Salutations to the Primal Lord, Who Through all Time ever remains Immaculate, Eternal, Immortal Attired in Immutability "Diet" and "Dispensation" are the key words in the text, reinforced by the twin-principles of union and separation. The Humility of Loving Adoration, *not* the haughtiness of miraculous powers, is the Path of Emancipation in Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism.

Pauri-30: The Mythical Goddess Maya (literally: figuratively, the creative mutable principle of the Universe) is believed to have given birth to the "Holy Triad"—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—the Hindu Gods of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction, respectively. The Myth is so widespread in Indian Society, and so deeply ingrained in Hindu psyche, that it is well nigh impossible to explode it—much less dislodge it. Following the dictates of his Revelation grounded in God's Irreconcilable Monarchy, as the One and Only One Primal Person, Guru Nanak hands out the Divine Knowledge as Sacrament of Grace to the earnest seeker. Dilating on this theme, the text of this *pauri* reads as under:

The immanent Maya in union with the Primal Person Conceived and delivered the accepted three Regents:

The Creator, the Preserver, and the Judge [But this is the pervasive illusion, in fact] For, all that there is what God Himself ordains Without being seen, He sees all at work This, indeed, is the Wonder of all wonders! Salutations to the Primal Lord, Who Through all Time ever remains Immaculate, Eternal, Immortal Attired in Immutability

A palpable picture of the Ultimate Reality emerges. That God is Himself All-in-All and, in His Unchallengeable-Unchangeable Sovereignty, He does not need any assistants, regents, or agents to perform the Fundament Divine Functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction. For one thing, He has empowered the universe to be a self-regulating/selfmonitoring Autonomous Cosmic System under the Sovereignty of His Own Will. For another, He *sees* too, without being Himself seen, everything, and everyone, at work—, which is a Wonder of all wonders. The point underscored is God's Indivisible, Self-Existent Identity that neither brooks, nor has, any Rival Power of any kind!

Pauri-31: Guru Nanak confronts the prevalent belief that this world is Maya i.e., unreal-something illusory to be shunned. His Logic of the Soul endorses the empirical observation through which all and sundry-and every kind of theistic and atheistic belief-sense, perceive, and cognise Objective Reality. This common-sensic view should put aside Mythology and Metaphysics, at best, as necessary evils-even besetting sins of ignorant, misguided minds. In such a scheme of Creative Mysticism, expounded on the basis of palpable Revelatory, Awakened-Soul seeing, there cannot be/need not be any room for speculation or Myth-making. It, therefore, renders both the Premises (i.e., The First Cause) and the Conclusion (i.e., Its Natural Effect) autonomously Real. Guru Nanak, holding God to be One and true, without a second, from the very proclamation of The Mool Mantra, tirelessly reiterates it with the electrifying force of Emotion-Reason-Intuition that neither Mythology nor Metaphysics can ever hope to match-much less outdo. Because The Creator is Perennially True/ Real, all His Creation must necessarily be True/Real, too. Hence, the Guru's tenacious insistence on Naam-contemplation Action [as Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression] of souls evolving towards a fuller, deeper, broader, and higher life. The text of the pauri reads as follows:

> In the countless worlds created by Him Lord's seat and His stores abide Inexhaustible are His treasure [Though these were raised just once] God with concern and compassion oversees The Universe He created in His Own Likeness Salutations to the Primal Lord, Who Through all Time ever remains Immaculate, Eternal, Immortal Attired in Immutability

Pauri-32: Having discountenanced, in the previous Pauris, all known and imaginable ways of attaining Communion, Guru Nanak underscores the exclusive efficacy of singing panegyrics to God to receive His Grace as Sacrament on the salver of Humility. By using the Monumental (Architectural) Scale, which is the opposite of human scale, he had shown the seeker the wondrous Bounty, Beauty, Diversity, and Mystery of All Creation as God's Manifest-Will. At this stage, now, he introduces another theme of fundamental import to the devotee. He pins down the almost-impossible task of winning over God to receive His Grace. Thus, employing the mesmeric tool of Monumental (Architectural) Scale, once again, he demonstrates the overwhelming task ahead that entails astronomical figures in devotional utterance of the Sole Name of the Lord of the Universe (*Ik Naam Jagdish*). By implication, this is God's Holiest Name, *Ik Oankar*. With it, Guru Nanak has launched his Bani in the *Mool Mantra*. The verse reads as under:

If Man' one tongue were to become a hundred thousand Nay, even twenty times more If each such tongue were to utter Lord's Holy Name A hundred thousand times each instant Such may then be the Stairs of Devotion, to ascend To attain Communion with Him That may impel even worms to emulate Those thus ascending on hearing of Heaven's Impeccable Glory By Divine Grace alone, Nanak, one may attain to God Vainglorious is all bragging of the charlatans.

The point to be noted is the Veto-Power that Divine Will has and, therefore, despite the titanic effort which the devotee is called upon to make, he must yet in all humility await God's Grace for Communion with Him. Man's wilfulness cannot *will* God's Will to yield. Hence, there is the need for his psycho-spiritual pliancy.

Pauri-33: Guru Nanak takes up the theme of Mortal Might to impress upon the seeker the absolute indispensability of Humility as the Quintessence of Loving Adoration. That, without these being there, in the first place, Communion is impossible to attain. The Guru, therefore, enumerates in this *pauri* various forms of Power that Man may acquire, but be quite helpless in the face of God's Omnipotence. The Guru thus conjures up a context in which to reveal to the seeker the enormous inequality that exists between Man and God in terms of Absolute Might. By the queer Logic of the Soul, Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism gently persuades the seeker *not* to waste his precious life in Ego-fancied combats with The Almighty Father. The charming amiability of his unique approach comes alive in the innocent challenge he throws to the arrogant, self-centred individuals: *Jis(i) hath(i) jor(u) kar(i) veikhai soi*.

> Neither speech nor silence within Man's power lies Neither the will to ask, nor the urge to give Neither life nor death on Man's striving depends Not even power or pelf by Man's endeavour comes Nor awareness nor knowledge nor reflection Neither by his power nor praxis May he achieve deliverance from worldliness He who thinks high of his temporal power Shall come to grief before God's Might In this respect, Nanak, no Man is in himself high or law.

Concisely, this *pauri* sets out the theme of Man's foreordained Duty to surrender his "Self" to Divinising by God's Inexorable Will, "*Raza*", propounded by Guru Nanak in the first *pauri* of Japuji. By his Egocentric toiling man achieves nothing to exalt his soul because ultimately all lies in Divine Will, whereby what man proposes God disposes in many inscrutable ways.

Pauri-34: In this, and the following three *Pauris*, Guru Nanak is guiding the seeker to the final stages of his Spiritual Pilgrimage. Again, the Guru employs the Monumental (Architectural) Scale to capture the immensity of the highest regions of Psycho-Spiritual Reality, which his Creative Mysticism scales with matchless virtuosity. He takes the Universal-Timeless values of Truth (*Satyam*), Beauty (*Sundaram*), and Goodness (*Shivam*), cast in the palpable earthiness of Utility, the fourth value created by the Modern Age of Science and Technology. Needless to say that the last-mentioned value becomes sanctified through a subliminal touch with *Ik Oankar*, God's Manifest-Divinity, propped, sustained, and regulated by His Holy Name as the Directive Principle of All Creation. The text reads as under:

God created Night and Day, Seasons and Occasions Air, Water, Fire, and the Nether Regions And, in their midst, installed the Moral Inn: Earth Wherein dwell beings and species Of myriad hues, forms, and lifestyles Of names many an illimitable All creatures on their actions are judged At the Divine Court of Justice As True as the Sovereign Judge Wherein are seated His Own Elect in Matchless Majesty Whom His Glance of Grace marks with Ultimate Approval There the genuine from fake are sifted Nanak, you shall know God's True Judgement When you get there in the times to come

Ethics, *Dharma*, the Cosmic Moral Law, is the ineluctable matrix of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, whereby the insists that life is a rare and difficult *performing* art which can be aesthetically appreciated and artistically (re-)created only by living it fully, deeply, and inspiredly. He has given all the technical knowhow, ethical knowwhat, and

spiritual knowwhy in his own unique way delineating a Path of Life, grounded in constant connection with The Source, Ik Oankar [through the Holy Name-Reciting], and spontaneously extending it into Extrovert (Altruistic) Progression. Although, during such pilgrimage, the seeker can certainly feel the Spiritual Metamorphosis within the marrow of his bones, the final test of its success will be consummated when God marks the Purified Soul with His Ultimate Approval Truth shall be minted, and quality-marked, only when the Soul has become malleable into Imperturbable Humility through the heat of enthusiasm for doing socially-beneficent work sustained by uninterrupted God-Remembrance. In its incomparably forthrightness, simplicity, authenticity, and live-mass-media telecast from The Source, Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism offers, without ceremony and discrimination, and intelligible, do-it-yourself, Pragmatic Spirituality in these words: Work, Worship, Welfare; then, Wait and Watch, fully involved in the vicissitudes of Life in self-surrendered to receive Divine Grace. Until that comes to pass, the seeker so disposed will yet stand to gain. He will certainly have earned a better life: fuller, deeper, broader, and higher before God quality-marks him as Jiwan-Mukat [emancipated in this very world!]

Pauri-35: The *pauri* begins with the concluding statement on the contents of the previous one. The Guru says: Such is the Order of the Realm of Righteous Action, the first of the Realms in ascending order of the Soul's Spiritual Pilgrimage: *Dharma Khand*. From here, he goes over to enunciate the law of the next one: the Realm of Enlightenment, or *Gian Khand*. The text of the *Pauri* is as follows:

Such is the order of the Realm of Righteous Action Law of the Realm of Enlightenment now follows: Countless forms of Air, Water, and Fire therein dwell Innumerable are there Krishnas and Shivas Innumerable too are Brahmas fashioning universes Of various forms, hues, and aspects Many are the fields of endeavour there Many the celestial mountains Many the sermons delivered to Dhruva Numerous are the Indras, spheres of Sun and Moon Numerous the contents and lands Many the accomplished Yogis, enlightened ones And supreme ascetics Many the incarnations of the Goddess Many are the species of gods, demons, sages Many oceans bearing the jewels Many are the modes of creation, many the forms of speech Many the lines of kings and sovereigns How numerous are the Revealed Scriptures And their followers There is no end to their count, Nanak

A noteworthy point is that even Myths and Mythology have not been able to capture the infinite diversity of gods and goddesses, demons and ascetics, and all the paraphernalia that goes with Myth-making, a perennial pastime of the human Mind in which Imagination has the *freest* play. Guru Nanak's method of deploying the tools of simultaneity and juxtaposition, in the use of Monumental (Architectural) Scale, as applicable to the Architectonics of Divine Creation, Preservation, and Destruction, is truly unique. The foregoing fact makes the Guru's Creative Mysticism an all-time classic of Pragmatic Spirituality. His delineation of the Many via-à-vis The One Sole Creator, in Mind-boggling detail, has a compelling beauty before whose Resplendent Immensity the Soul has no choice but to surrender. This is the most crucial point in Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, for it is from here that the seeker would view, in the euphoria of psycho-aesthetic enchantment, the spiritually-uplifting Spectacle of God's Eternal-Infinite Divinity-before he is re-absorbed, if He so Wills, into The Source. Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is a Holistic Itinerary, Ethical Atlas, and Spiritual Guide for the

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Vagabond Soul that urges it to retrace its steps to undertake its homeward journey into the Realm of the Spirit. Slowly and steadily, it weans the seeker from the fake inducements of the Worldliness of Mammon into a Pilgrimage where more and better fulfilments await his ever-hungry self.

Pauri-36: In this *pauri*, Guru Nanak concludes in the first two lines, his narrative of the Realm of Enlightenment, which is the next higher level to the Realm of Righteous Action. From here, he goes on to the next level: The Realm of Spiritual Endeavour.

The text reads as under:

Ethereal Effulgence blazes forth In the Realm of Enlightenment In that sphere reign mystic melody, sublime visions Aesthetic wonder and creative joy Beauty is the muted speech Of the Realm of Spiritual Endeavour Sculpted there are forms of enchanting exquisiteness Its resplendence beggars all description Woe betokens the one who ventures to describe them Fashioned there are soul-consciousness Sensibility, Mind, and Intellect Forged therein too is the vision Of gods and super-naturalists

It should be pointed that Guru Nanak, here, reiterates what forms the Matrix of his Creative Mysticism: an unremitting effort on the part of the seeker, because Life, as pointed out before, is an exclusive Performing Art that is validated, authenticated, and consummated by *actual* living (and not by merely speculating or philosophising as an armchair luxury!). Thus, in his five-tiered staircase, he has put Endeavour (*Saram*) in the middle, and higher than Knowledge and Morality. Thus, his Creative Mysticism is *not* a Religion of Monasticism or of Sensual Indulgence. It is Pragmatic Spirituality of *mid-stream* involvement, *not* Mythology or Metaphysics or Mysticism of escape from the imperatives, exigencies, and vicissitudes of an intensely lived experience. Those researchers, revivalists, and rationalists, who have shown Guru Nanak's New Faith: Creative Mysticism, to be a syncretisation of Hinduism and Islam, have unfortunately taken the husk for the grain. *In this Bani, there is a persistent, if mute, plea for taking a fresh, holistic look at the Guru's Revelation as something straight from the Oven*. Moreover, before long, if his Grace is upon them, it may impel them to change their evaluation for their good—and the general weal of the Entire Human Community. The psychokinetic Kinship of Humankind beckons them to new horizons of aesthetic enchantment, transcending the sensory, perceptive, and cognitive experience.

Pauri-37: Having prepared the seeker—with his Mind scrubbed clean of Egotism, through the massive milling of the previous 36 *Pauris*—Guru Nanak convinces him from his Revelation that the former's soul is a suitable and sanctified salver for receiving the Sacrament (of Grace). He, therefore, takes the seeker to the next higher level: the Realm of Grace (*Karam Khand*). Now, read on:

Might speaks of the Grandeur of the Realm of Grace Nothing else avails there Where heroes of supreme might abide Their hearts fired with God's Love Minds sewn seamlessly in his adulation In Lord's Praise mystically absorbed Indefinable is their exquisite beauty Death touches them not, nor does anyone swindle them In whose Minds does God dwell Devotees from all the worlds assemble there Cherishing His Love, enraptured in Eternal Bliss As explicated in Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, the ultimate aim of the Soul's entire pilgrimage, is to transcend the experience of *Dharma* (Righteous Action), *Gyan* (Enlightenment), *Saram* (Spiritual Endeavour), and *Karam* (Grace), and to enter *Sach Khand* (the Realm of Truth) to abide there Eternally in the Divine Presence of *Ik Oankar*. The Dispensation of Grace is the unpremeditated, inscrutable operation of God's Edict-Fiat. So awesome is its Majesty and Mystery that Guru Nanak says: "Its expression is as hard as it is to put words into the mouth of steel!"

All the same, the Guru Nanak takes the seeker to the Most High and Exalted of all Realms. Just read on the remaining part of the verse:

The Realm of Truth is where The Formless One abides Whence He unceasingly creates, showers Grace, and Oversees Countless orbs, regions, and firmaments there Extend infinitely Far exceeding in number all count Worlds upon worlds abide there, and countless forms too His Edict-Fiat sustains all these His Infinite Creation God watches over In Blissful Progression And reflects upon All, Eternally So hard is its description, Nanak That it's like putting words Into the mouth of steel

Pauri-38: Just as during his unprecedented Discourse Guru Nanak has placed certain *Pauris* of crucial importance at certain intervals, in the exposition of the Japuji, he puts this particular *pauri* right at the end. This is by careful design, *not* by accident, the concluding part of his Japuji is a reiteration of his New Faith which is grounded in *Dharma*, The Divinely-Ordained Cosmic Moral Law—and has nothing to do, it can never be overstressed, with either Mythology or

Metaphysics or Mysticism or innumerable other-worldly "Paths" of Salvation and God-Realisation. This pauri re-stresses Guru Nanak's Impeccable Religiosity in which, unlike any known religious leader of the world, he proclaims in unequivocal terms, ad infinitum, that "Truth is the Highest of all forms of Reality, but Higher than Truth is Truthful Living"(The ineluctable Dharma of a Sachiar). In doing so, Guru Nanak reaffirms the most important Cardinal Principle of his New Faith by drawing the seeker's attention back to where he got him started on his soul's Pilgrimage. In this way he completes the Circuit of Psycho-Spiritual Energy-between The Source and the Seeker via the Guru (the Transformed): "Kiv sachiara hoiai kiv kurhai tutai paal(i)"-How to demolish the Wall of Illusion (i.e., Ego-Centrism) and How to be purified [to become worthy of The True One's Divine Grace]? Therefore, here, the Guru shows the seeker the way of purging his self of the dross of Ego. This is to prepare him mentally-morally-bodily so that he lets go spontaneously (Sahj) everything in self-surrender before God's Will for his Soul's transfiguration from a Matter-Bondaged Existence to a Spirit-Liberated Reality.

All through the Discourse, Guru Nanak's emphasis always has been on the individual human person—an innocent, beguiled, and misguided psychokinetic entity—in existential need of path-finding for Salvation and God-Realisation. This is truly exceptional, and speaks volumes for his Creative Mysticism.

The verse, employing the metaphor of Mint, reads as under: Make Continence the smithy, Perseverance the goldsmith Let Reason be the anvil, and Knowledge furnish the tools God's fear is the bellows, penance the heat and fire Loving devotion the crucible, to forge the Immortal Vision In such true Mint coin the Holy Word Such a rare deed falls to their lot On whom is bestowed the Divine Grace Blessed are they, Nanak, who are fulfilled by His Glance of Grace. In the concluding couplet, Guru Nanak, once again, as several times before, leaves the last and final judgement of God's Inscrutable Will.

The finale to the Japuji is a *Sloku* authored by Guru Angad, the First Spiritual-Heir to Guru Nanak's Revelation. For centuries has this been an integral part of Sikh Faith's most widely recited Bani of the First Masters. It is, therefore, incumbent to conclude the explication of Japuji with it for the stated reason. Another reason is that Guru Angad's *Sloku* is the most concise, succinct, and stupendous of all summaries of, and commentaries on, Guru Nanak's Japuji.

Epilogue (Sloku)Air is the vital force (subtle as the Guru)Water is the ProgenitorThe Good Earth, Mother of AllDay and Night are nurses, caressing the entire CreationThe Righteous Judge reckons merit and demerit of
EveryoneEveryoneHis approval or rejection comes from each one's own
ActionsThose who, meditating on God, have earned merit
Through an unremitting moral endeavour
Saith Nanak, Their faces irradiate Divine Light
Through them, many shall find their final release

As especially enshrined in Japuji, Guru Nanak's Bani substantiates the fact that Religion, grounded in *Dharma* (The Cosmic Moral Law), is the Architecture of total human consciousness, integrating Soul, Mind, and Body, in the individual as an active agent of Pragmatic Spirituality. He is inspired to develop it *creatively* and holistically through everyday work as a householder, *not* an ascetic retired to the forests.



MENTAL CONSTRUCT FOR GURU NANAK'S BANI

In this chapter, **Mysticism** and **Creativity** are examined to conjure up a Mental Construct for "Creative Mysticism", which distinguishes Guru Nanak's Bani from both the stated disciplines—taken either separately or together, as discussed in detail in Chapter-II.

Mysticism

Since Mysticism is central to the study of Religion in general and the present work in particular, it is necessary to examine the subject in adequate detail. Mysticism is a quest for a hidden truth or wisdom ('the treasure hidden in the centre of our souls"). The subject has been gaining a renewed interest during the 20th century, thanks to the feeling of self-deracination that many persons experience in the modern world. Mysticism, or the mystical faculty of perceiving transcendental reality, is often called "a religion of the élite".

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is reputed to have introduced transcendental meditation (TM in American parlance) with a view to helping all and sundry to combat self-deracination and to regain an integrated personality strong enough to withstand the stresses and strains of contemporary lifestyle. In spite of Jiddu Krishnamurti's persistent exhortations that "man himself is the problem" and then the only durable and definitive way of moving out of his self-created impasse is through "a choiceless inner seeking", the mystique of Mysticism has survived. Thus, there is a discomfiting truth in the British author Aldous Huxley's statement that "a totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane". That Karl Marx succeeded in establishing an awesome alternative to religion—which he put down as "opium of the masses"—speaks volumes for his extraordinary genius and his perpetual concern for the amelioration of the human condition. But that the new religion "Communism" which he instituted fell in barely 73 years is a grave tragedy—the unparalleled brilliance of dialectical materialism notwithstanding. Just as religion was wished away (even washed away, if only temporarily) as "opium of the masses", Marxism met its logical end, if ironically, in its fossilisation as "opium of the élite" the avant-gardists of uncommunism droolingly consumed in armchair discussions. This historic failure, that had had only a few decades before an historic victory, lends credence to the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore's terse observation that "Man has a feeling that he is truly represented in something which exceeds himself."

Mysticism: Nature and Significance

Having regained the ground it had lost in the face of Science's onslaught, Mysticism is gradually flourishing all over the globe. The so-called "ancient wisdom" of the East, including Yoga (proclaimed as a system of physical and mental exercises leading to spiritual upliftment) with characteristic emphasis on marketability, is being recycled in scientifictechnological terminology as a panacea for modern man's illimitable ills. It is thus worthwhile to examine the nature and significance of Mysticism which now is prefiguring in do-it-yourself manuals and courses.

The goal of Mysticism (*EB*, Vol. 12, pp. 786-792) is union with the divine or sacred. The path to that union is usually developed by following four stages: purgation (of bodily desires), purification (of the will), illumination (of the mind), and unification (of one's will or being with the divine). If "the object of man's existence is to be a Man, that is, to re-establish the harmony which originally belonged between him and the divinized state before the separation took place which disturbed the equilibrium" (The Life and doctrine of Paracelsus), Mysticism will always be a part of the way of return to the source of being, a way of counteracting the experience the alienation. There is obviously something non-mental, a-logical, paradoxical, and unpredictable about the mystical phenomenon. That is why Mysticism must be force consist of a way or discipline, encompassing a praxis (technique) and gnosis (esoteric knowledge)—if it has to survive by catering to the demands of a scientific temper.

As for **Science**, it is analytic and discursive and expresses its findings in precise and abstract formulas. **Mysticism**, however, like **Poetry** (the highest of fine arts, according to the Indian system which lists in the descending order: Poetry, Music, Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture), depends more on paradoxes and an unusual use of language. Philosophies may lead to or follow from Mysticism, but they are not the same. Prayer and worship may form part of Mysticism, but they are viewed as means and not as essence. Also, they are usually continuations of sensory experience, whereas Mysticism is a pure unitary consciousness, or a union with God.

Basic Patterns: Mysticism arises when man tries to bring the urge toward a communion with God. According to the British scholar William Ralph Inge, God is a "Being conceived as the supreme and ultimate reality". This urge can have other goals too, such as a higher consciousness and being in relation with the other contents of his mind and total personality. In such a state he tries to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in the nature or, more generally, in the attempt to realise (in though and feeling) the immanence of the temporal in the eternal.

Mysticism may be defined as the belief in a third kind of knowledge, the other two being sense knowledge and knowledge by inference. According to Adolf Lasson, "The essence of Mysticism is the assertion of an intuition which transcends the temporal categories of the understanding... Rationalism cannot conduct us to the essence of things, we therefore need intellectual vision." Seen in this sense, paradigmatic pronouncements in regard to Mysticism pose problems of their own.

The classic Indian formula—"that thou art", *tat tvam asi (Chandogya Upanishad*, 6.9)—is hedged in with the profoundest ambiguity. The difficulty reappears in the thought of the mediaeval Christian mystic Meister Eckehart, who had the church raising questions for such

unguarded statements as "The knower and the known are one. God and I, we are one in knowledge" and "There is no distinction between us".

Attitudes toward Mysticism since the middle of the 20th century have been considerably modified by an awareness of subliminal consciousness, extrasensory perceptions and, above all, an evolutionary perspective. The Roman Catholic palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin asked if in an expanding universe Mysticism would not burst the limits of narrow cults and religious rigidity and move toward an ecumenical culture. In a larger view, Mysticism has not so much to be defined a renewed and redefined, Or, perhaps, better still—reconstructed.

Means and Modes of the Mystical Relationship: All genres of Mystics have developed their own brands of means and modes of meeting the divine. Some have taken recourse to fasting, breath, control, meditation, ecstasy, simplification, autosuggestion (self-hypnosis), and monoideism (absorption in a single idea). Rituals, in some cases, provided the coveted contact. An old method is the "negative way": "the emptier your mind, the more susceptible are you to the working of the presence". Works of art are also accredited conductions of the numinous (as against the phenomenal). Examples: Sung (Chinese) paintings, Gothic cathedrals, mediaeval temple architecture in India, the Egyptian sphinx, music like Roman Catholic solemn mass, or Sanskrit (Hindu) hymns. Darkness, solitude, silence, and emptiness are sometimes enough for the sensitive soul, and the doors of perception open to a wider world beyond. But, always, it is less the object than something seen through the object, a bodiless presence, that forms the essence. Without symbols in which the holy is embodies, the experience of the holy vanishes.

Symbolism of Love and Marriage: Mystics regard souls as always feminine. Hence the symbolism of love and marriage. Not all the Mystics have been deniers or champions of repression. The Christian Mystics St Bernard and St John of the Cross, the Islamic Sufi poets, and the Hindu Dravidian and Vaisnava saints could teach lovers. St Bernard has shown that through carnal, mercenary, filial, and nuptial love the life of man moves towards the mystery of grace and union. In a slightly different set of symbols, St John of the Cross states that after the soul has driven away from itself all that is contrary to the divine will, it is "transformed in God by love".

According to the Sufis, the pilgrim (another prominent symbolism of the journey: way, quest, or pilgrimage) is the perceptive or intuitional sense of man. Aided by attraction, devotion, and elevation, the journey leads, by way of many a wine shop (divine love), to the tavern (illumination), "the journey to God in God".

Essentially a way of return, *ricorso*, the final aim of Mysticism is transfiguration (a transformation or glorification in appearance).

Psychological Aspects of Mysticism: Mysticism is that Science in which the psychology of man mingles with the psychology of God. The major change or orientations is from the level of the profane to the sacred—an awareness of the divine in man and outside. A mark of the mystic life is the great access of energy and enlarged awareness, so much so that the man who obtains the vision becomes, as it were, another being. Mansions of the mind, *maqaaam* (Arabic: place), and *bhoomi* (Sanskrit, land), open up to the gaze of the initiate, a wayfarer of the worlds. This means a renewal or conversion until one knows that the earth alone is not man's teacher. The Mystic begins to draw his sustenance from supersensuous sources. He has "drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine", and a hidden bliss, knowledge, and power begin to sweep through the gates of his senses.

Besides, awareness being a chief characteristic of Mysticism, identification plays an important role in it. The state of energising is facilitated by controlled attention. It is customary to fix the mind on some object or idea, some focus of contemplation. According to the Indian formula, to worship God one must become like him (*devam bhutva devam yajet*). Exercises, physical no less than mental (*Yoga*), including methods of worship and prayer, have been developed to this end until one becomes what one contemplates. The ranges and creative aspects of the mind are part of the psychology of the Mystics and one of the oldest traditions of mankind. The old Indian psychology divided consciousness into three provinces: Waking state (*jaagrat*), dream state (*svapna*), and sleep state (*susupti*), and added a fourth (*turiya*), which is the consciousness of man's pure self-existence or being. The fourfold scale represents the rungs of the ladder of being by which man climbs back to the source, the absolute divine.

Problems of Communication and Understanding: The problem of communication, of tidings from another world, is obvious. Transvaluation of value is not easy to accept, to adjust to, or express. The dialogue between mystical and other pursuits is an unsolved problem. Even if it is difficult to describe voices and visions and dangerous to systematise, the direction in which Mysticism points is clear: Relational Transcendence. The 20th century crises and the mass media (notably, computer simulation and animation) suggest the possibility of a Mysticism brought up to date that will serve "the Creative Intention that past ages have called God". Whether it comes through symbols, systems, paradigmatic examples, or extreme situations, there will probably always be some response to the cell of the real.

Creativity: A Spiritual Perspective

To create is to bring into being or form out of the available materials and means by the deployment of one's personal resources of intuition, imagination, reason, emotion. It also means to invest with a new form, or character, or dignity. The ability to create, or the state or quality of being creative, is creativity. Creativity is the presentation of a new conception (Content) in an artistic embodiment (Form). This is the endowment given to Man by the Creator, the Supreme Being, God. Created in God's own image, every human being is *creative*, for life itself has been created as a self-renewing, self-sustaining creative process. The very fact that life goes on, and on, endlessly, without exhausting its potential as a creative surge, substantiates this view. Allama Iqbal, the Poet of the East (*Sha'ir-i-Mashriq*) has underscored this axiom in his beautiful, inimitable style:

> Too ise paimana-i-imroz-o-farda se na naap Jaavidaan, paiham, dawaan, hardam jawaan hai zindagi

You mustn't reckon it by the measure of today and tomorrow Eternal, always on the go, forever youthful, is life. The beauty and bounty of nature (called Mother Nature) is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for man to activate, develop, and express his creativity in innumerable ways. Nature, indeed, is the veritable Museum of Creativity in which Life (living matter as against inanimate objects) is both a process and a product)

Characteristic of Creativity

Creativity is not merely continuation, not even an extension of what once was. Even renewal is not the term to capture quintessence of Creativity. Creativity is primarily distinguished from other forms of human activity by **Originality**. This characteristic underscores the fundamental uniqueness of each product thrown up by the process of Creativity. It means that though no two products, such as human beings or plants or animals, are the same, they are not better or worse than others. This uniqueness, or the quality of being "sole" or "without a like" makes comparison odious, if not completely redundant. As such, all the Creation, represented by the products—human beings, animals, insects, plants, etc, brings out the quintessence of creativity with axiomatic existentialism. In the ultimate scheme of things, all human beings are different, not better or worse than others. Besides, Creativity must bring about a qualitative change even in what is measurable as a quantity.

As a process, Creativity is an unending endeavour in the pursuit of optimal utilisation of the materials and means deployed in the creation of a certain product. Creativity impels the process into progressive stages of refinement, from crude beginnings through development to highly-refined results. The aeroplane, or the flying machine, created by the Wright Brothers in the beginning of the 20th century, has successively been streamlined to an aircraft which is an object of art. From its crude beginnings of constructing the whole by holding the parts together, the aircraft is now an organic, seamless work of art in which the parts seem to grow out of the whole in an irrepressible creative urge. Creativity thus pursues three things: compactness, miniaturisation, and economy with its operation, monitoring, and

maintenance improved manifold. Laptop computers have a come a long, long way from unwieldy, cumbersome machines to become compact, miniaturised, and economical handmaidens, literally, of thousands of present-day users.

The mechanical precision noted in the foregoing examples, however, does not apply in the same form, and to the same degree, to other forms of Creativity. In architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music, dance, and drama, the exactitude of Creativity is rather imprecise. In fact, it is good that this is really so. Otherwise artistic creation will be akin to industrial production *dehumanising* both the process and the product. In this sense, it is important to note other characteristics of Creativity: Spontaneity, and Unpredictability. Spontaneity is when one lets go the creative urge within oneself to find its own best expression. Of course, spontaneity of this kind is achieved after years of Riyaz, rigorous practice and assiduous application, when it becomes as natural as breathing. This spontaneity must not be confused with lack of skill, or constitutional laziness. Nor must it become a conditioned behaviour. Guru Nanak has used the term Sahi, which is unconditioned spontaneity, a kind of unpremeditated spurt of innocent (i.e., motiveless) outpouring of creative energy. When the mind is sparked by its native divinity, "thought, word, and deed" are aligned into socially-beneficent action the Guru has called "seva" (service).

Unpredictability implies that the act of creation is not premeditated. If one knows the end-results of one's creative endeavour beforehand, one can be sure than the indulgence is not impelled by Creativity. In other words, Creativity is unpredictable insofar as one knows the point where one begins but never the one where one would finally end up. The implication is that with the let-go attitude, Creativity is free-flowing energy that nourishes the process as much as it freshens up the product. In this light, it should be easy to see that the product of Creativity is Creativity frozen at a certain point in Time-Space Continuum. Of course, the nature and scope of the use of a product would be determined, if only imprecisely, by what had motivated or impelled the creative person, in the first place, to indulge in the Act of Creation the way he did.

Qualitative Change: Creativity brings about a qualitative change in the beneficiary's perception, personality, passion, pursuit, and purpose by virtue of which he/she becomes a transformed individual human personso civilised as to compulsively engage in socially-beneficent activities throughout his/her mortal life. This is so because human creativity is the only irrefutable evidence that God is the Primal Creative Resource Person [Guru Nanak Dev has called Karta Purkh] of Creativity actually exists. Therefore, to indulge in creativity is to be in creative partnership with God in the furtherance of His goals in the created world. The import of this unique trait could be grasped when one knows from scientific evidence that only members of the Homo sapiens' species are creative; every creature in the Animal Kingdom lives by instinct i.e. thinking with the body-and living in strict compliance with the dictates of pre-programmed existence. In this context, Creativity also implies the existence of Free Will that only humans possess and use [more often than not, misuse and abuse driven by untamed passions that are the intrinsic formidable powers of the Five Inner Foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride]. Animals cannot commit suicide; only human beings can.

Another noteworthy, but oft-ignored, aspect here must be highlighted. Science has established that dolphins have a brain superior to human grey matter. And their sexuality is akin to humans in that it is not seasonal, like in the case of other animals. Dolphins quickly learn to mimic human voice and actions. But, then, why are dolphins still in the sea whereas Man dwelling on land has made incredible advancement in an amazing range of fields? My answer: Dolphins have no hands, although their bodies are brilliantly adapted to the fluid Environment. From this it follows that human progress is not entirely the result of superior brain. Man couldn't have done and achieved much without his two dexterous hands. In other words, manual skills are the tools of human creativity.

Function of Creativity

All human activities have an end in view, to achieve which the available means, including those contrived, are deployed to their utmost. To understand the Function of Creativity, the four basic
faculties associated with the human mind must be considered. These are: Reason, Emotion, Imagination, and Intuition.

Reason is the human mind's power of drawing conclusions and determining right and truth. An index of sanity, Reason impels one to conform one's behaviour to what is fairly to be expected or called form. It also means a cause, an underlying explanatory principle. In this sense, Reason furnishes the ground, support, or justification of an act or belief. Edgar Allen Poe, the American poet and author of horror stories which are known worldwide, once wrote that Reason, being the chief idiosyncrasy, suffers from a certain curse of the human mind that it is not content with the knowledge of a thing. Much less is it content with the knowledge of doing it. It must both *know* and *show* how a thing is done. It, therefore, follows that the exercise of this curious faculty of Reason makes the human mind inconsolably restless i.e., impatient of inactivity or of remaining still. Reason is a long-jumper. Its leap may be small, but it always lands ahead of the point from where it jumps.

Reason is the sine qua non of Creativity.

Emotion is one of three groups of the phenomena of the human mind: feeling, distinguished from cognition, and will. It is a moving of the feelings, which often ends up in the agitation of the mind. Emotion is a high-jumper. No matter how high it jumps, it always lands on nearly the same point from where it takes off. The running-distance that Emotion requires for the high jump is given to it by Reason—and is therefore not within the former's purview.

Emotion is the animating principle of Creativity.

Imagination is the faculty of forming images in the mind. It is the human mind's creative power. Imagination has the curious powers of releasing thought from the constraints of the immediate, material and/ or moral, conditions as imperative in the constant interplay of time and space. Imagination takes thought on an involuntary flight into realms yet unknown to sensory experience.

Imagination frees thought from the stranglehold of materiality.

Intuition is the power of the human mind by which it immediately perceives the truth of things *without* reasoning or analysis or sentimental savouring. It furnishes immediate knowledge in contrast with the mediate.

Intuition is the instant furnisher of knowledge.

When Reason, Emotion, and Imagination go into wedlock, Intuition is born. However, Intuition must not be confused with Instinct, which is the uncanny ability of thinking with one's body.

Creativity finds its ground-support in **Reason**; draws its life from **Emotion**; and its streamlined shape from **Intuition**—all extended to new horizons of sensation, perception, and cognition by the power of **Imagination**.

While Cognition (apprehension of the world) and Will (faculty of choosing and determining) play their part in Creativity, they are subsumed—for the purpose of this discourse—under the four foregoing faculties of the human mind: Reason, Emotion, Imagination, and Intuition.

In Creativity, as an active process, leading to an intended product, the experience of artistic creation rightfully belongs to the creator—in terms of art. In terms of society, the experience of aesthetic appreciation rightfully belongs to the masses. The real purpose or function of Creativity may be disputed, but there is a general agreement in the belief that Creativity is a means to some end, whether that end be the titillation of the senses or the communication of the notions of the world or the conversion of Humankind to belief in God or the improved moral belief or moral tone of the masses. *Creativity, whatever be its material and methods, functions in order to produce effects which are primarily sensory, cognitive, moral, religious, or social.*

Sensory: The function of Creativity, according to Hedonism, is to produce just one kind of effect: aesthetic pleasure. Such a sensory effect may also inform or instruct, represent or express. It may also move, shock, challenge, or change the lives of those who experience it deeply.

Aesthetic Pleasure is only one of the many kinds of effects Creativity produces.

Cognitive: Creativity's cognitive function is a means to the acquisition of the highest knowledge (viz., of truth) available to man, such as is impossible of attainment by any other means.

Moral: Another function of Creativity is as a handmaiden of morality. If it fails to promote moral influence of the desired kind, the moralist would look at it with suspicion and sometimes with grudging tolerance of its existence in works of art. Creativity, by its very nature, implants in society unorthodox ideas. It breaks the moulds of provincialism in which people have been brought up. It disturbs and disquiets, since it tends to emphasise individuality rather than conformity. Therefore, when it promotes questioning and defies established attitudes, Creativity is viewed by the moralist as insidious and subversive. It is viewed with approval only if it promotes or reinforces the moral beliefs and attitudes adhered to by the moralist.

Aesthetic: Diametrically opposed to moralism is aestheticism the cult of the beautiful is founded on the principles of aesthetics. The aestheticism holds that Creativity provides the most intense and pervasive experience available in human life, and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with it. The vital intensity of the aesthetic experience is the paramount goal in human life. If there are morally undesirable effects, they do not really matter in comparison to this allimportant aesthetic experience.

The Middle Course: The moralistic and aesthetic positions are extremes, and the truth is likely to the found somewhere in the middle. Aesthetics and Morality (Ethics) are intimately related, and neither functions wholly without the other. Perhaps "Creative Interaction" could be used to label the view that aesthetic and moral values each have distinctive roles to play in the world but that neither operates independently of the other.

In the present study, **Architecture** is a view and way of life, aimed at apprehending the beauty and bounty of truth revealed by Guru Nanak in his Bani, notably, the Japuji. It is therefore imperative to examine Creativity, as heretofore discussed, in terms of the Elements, Principles, Objectives, and Strategies, it assumes as a discipline of Architecture. Architecture is by far the completest and most fascinating of man's activities, encompassing as it does (*actually*, not theoretically or wishfully) the four major field of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. The Humanities speculate. Art expresses. Science investigates. Technology invents. Correspondent to these fields, respectively, are the time-honoured, universal values: Goodness (*Shivam*), Beauty (*Sundaram*), Truth (*Satyam*), and Utility (*Upyog*). The last has been introduced by industrial economy with its characteristic emphasis on consumerism: a curious acquire-and-throw-away culture which pleases the unappeasable whims and fancies of Mammon.

Architecture is the matrix of human civilisation. In Architecture, Creativity finds its acme, realises its full potential, and manifests its pristine glory. In Architecture, feeling is inferior to productive action, which is inferior to contemplation. Contemplation is the *raison d'être* of all right (-eous) action, which seeks to ameliorate the human condition thereby benefiting the entire humanity. Although Architecture is essentially the art and science of building, all buildings are *not* Architecture. Architecture is the only apt expression of the verity and value of Creative Mysticism. Architecture creates and dwells in myriad symbols—embodying the values of Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Utility. "A symbol is characterised by the translucence of the Eternal in and through the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is representative". [Coleridge]

A brief discussion of the Elements, Principles, Objectives, and Strategies of Creativity, as they apply to Architecture, should be in order.

Elements are the simplest parts of which anything consists or into which it may be analysed irreducibly. Space, Structure, and Form are the three elements of which Architecture is made. Space is the Great Void, uninhabited emptiness, from which all that exists physically must be shaped. A basic aim of Architecture is the creation of Shelter, which is no more than Space enclosed (by walls and roof) in an organised manner i.e., Architecture, insofar as it is manmade, happens by design (i.e., deliberate, planned effort), and *not* by chance or accident. Shelter is composed of Structure and Form, just as the human body is composed of the bony skeleton and the fleshy muscles and skinny surface, the finished form. Accidentally, these three elements are there in all forms of art: literary, visual, performing. Dance, Drama, Music (Performing Arts) are spacio-temporal i.e., they exist both in space and time. In painting and sculpture, time is frozen as an event corresponding to the Act of Creation (Genesis) which brought them into being. Though similar is the case with poetry, the frozen time is thawed into fluid grace (rhythm) when poetry (the art of word-pictures-patterns) is recited (which it must be, and not merely read—visually!) In Architecture, Form comprises outline, colour, and texture. It may be geometrical or free (i.e., biomorphic or organic with curves).

Principles are fundaments unchanging truths; the ultimate source or cause or origin of something. Together they constitute a comprehensive law or doctrine from which others are derived, or on which others are founded.

Principles of Architecture are: Balance, Harmony, Proportion, Scale, Rhythm, and Unity. **Balance** is visual (painting, sculpture, architecture) or audial (poetry, music) equilibrium (i.e., a state in which opposing forces or tendencies neutralise each other). It is the general harmony among the parts (masses, colours, etc.) of anything, especially an artefact. Balance may be Formal (i.e., symmetrical by means of identical parts or mirror-image on an axis as in human beings, animals, fish, aeroplanes, ships, automobiles) or Informal when, on opposite sides of an axis, one or more parts are brought into equilibrium by dissimilar or contrasting elements.

Balance is a prime requisite of all forms of Creativity involving the acts of planning, designing, and constructing.

Harmony results from combination or adaptation of parts, elements, or related things, so as to form a consistent and orderly whole. Leibnitz uses the term "pre-established before their creation, whereby their actions correspond though no communication exists between them. Harmony in Painting is the orderly combination of colours and textures resulting in an aesthetically-pleasing visual effect. In Music, it is the combination of simultaneous tones into a chord (i.e.,

an audially-pleasing union of consonant or concordant notes). Harmony is fundamental to all forms of Creativity as it produces a unity of effect or an organic whole, which gives aesthetic pleasure.

Proportion and Scale are inter-related as both deal with the problems of sizes and their relationships with one another. Proportion is the relation of one part or portion to another, or to the whole, or of one thing to another, with regard to magnitude, quantity, or degree. An artefact is said to be well-proportioned when the comparative relation or ration among its parts, as to the whole, produces a pleasant effect. Scale deals with the whole, rather than parts, in terms of magnitude, quantity, or degree. Two forms of Scale are common: the Human Scale, and the Monumental Scale. The Taj Mahal (Agra) is built to a monumental (i.e., manifold exaggeration) scale, although it is a burial-place for only two persons! By contrast, Salim Chisti's tomb in Fatehpur Sikri is human in scale, although its character is monumental (i.e., commemorative). The Romans and the Mughals were very fond of the monumental scale as it effectively created a sense of awe (i.e., fear and reverence) in the minds of their subjects. In a democracy, only public buildings (i.e., structures for use by the public at large) deserve the monumental scale. In private buildings, the use of monumental scale is tantamount to a vulgar display of ill-acquired riches.

Rhythm is the measure of time or movement by regularly recurring impulses, sounds, etc., as in poetry, and music, and, by analogy, dancing. It is the measured motion which, by regular recurrence, produces delightful patterns of sight (as in painting, sculpture, architecture) or sound (as in poetry, music). Of all the principles, Rhythm is the most fundamental as it is the only single principle found in all forms of Creativity, their mediumistic eccentricities notwithstanding. *The Order and Harmony of the Cosmos is sustained by the heartbeats which Rhythm creates in the souls of stars, planets, and all forms of living matter.*

Unity is the quality or fact of constituting a complex, systematic undivided whole so as to create an impression of being one as completein-itself. Although its seeming oneness or singularity is opposed to division or plurality, unity is essentially pluralistic. In the case of only one object, the structural coherence is intrinsic to its existence. There cannot be any question of dis-unity, while that objects exists. Unity lies in the organisation of parts by which objects otherwise unrelated are so placed that the mind loses sight of them as separate entities, and notes only the resulting composition as an organic (i.e., seemingly seamless) whole. So fundamental is the principle of Unity that scarcely any other quality is needed for excellence in a work of Creativity. *A unique quality of Unity, which has hitherto been ignored, is that, in a work of Creativity, even destruction must be represented as construction (i.e., as a composition of constituent parts carefully selected from out of the junk-yard randomness of the debris of destruction!*)

Objectives can be seen clearly if we first consider the basic function of Architecture, which is to create shelter for the multifarious activities of human beings. The function has two aspects: utility, and aesthetic. Architecture must fulfil the needs for which it is created (utility), and must be a sublimation of sensory, perceptive, and cognitive experience (aesthetic). Architecture, as built environment, must create Order which is one of its chief Objectives. The others are Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. The randomness of Nature needs reorganisation and reconstruction so that Order be created out of Chaos. Order means the general constitution of the world regulated by a system or principle so that there is place for everything and everything is in its place. Without Order, conditions for efficient and purposeful working can never be established. Truth is the apprehension and expression of the Ultimate Reality whereby accuracy of adjustment or conformity to inviolate principles is achieved. Insofar Architecture is concerned, Nature is the best known embodiment of such Fundamental Principles which inspire, inform, and organise human Creativity.

Beauty is the splendour of Truth, of Order (Unity), of Form [Jacques Maritain]. It also means the absolute perfection of the ideal, or idea, as suggested by, or reflected in, the relative sensuous perfection of an artefact. That any object of use should also be beautiful is the essential doctrine of Beauty in the Oriental, the Mediaeval Christian, and all ancient traditions. Beauty is the intellectualised sense which gives rise to aesthetic joy in the heart. By this token, Beauty is not accessible to the intellectually timid. According to EW Emerson,

"Beauty is a virtue of the body, as virtue is the beauty of the soul... We ascribe beauty to that which is simple, which has no superfluous parts; which exactly answers its end. Beauty rests on necessities. The line of beauty is the line of perfect economy." **Goodness** is the aesthetic of character—a spontaneous, undistorted, qualmless expression of the inner person. Something is good when it promotes health, welfare, or happiness. When one transfers human benevolence to its origin, God becomes good, with the insertion of an additional "o". Utility is fitness for perfect use. **Utility** is the power to satisfy the wants of people in general. It gives one the all-important insight into the ultimate scheme of things that nothing that exists is without use, for the cosmos is an active conglomerate of interrelationships, interdependences, and interactions.

Strategies: Literally, strategy is the science of war. Strategy, therefore, aims at the chalking out of Action Plan to achieve the desired goal with a minimal waste of space, time, energy, and material resources. In other words, if the Action Plan works as intended, one should hit the bull's-eye at the first shot. A strategy has the twin parameters/ criteria of Economy and Efficiency. Creative Economy is the fuel of art [WR Lethaby]. Economy means a system of rules by which anything is organised, operated, and managed by a prudent and sparing use of means to an end. It is judicious handling, rather than greedy hoarding, of material resources. Efficiency is the effective operation as measured by a comparison of actual and possible results. It is effectiveness as compared with the capacity to perform or with cost in energy, time, money, materials, etc. In other words, Efficiency is the approximation of the output with the input so that everything is optimised in the Act of Creation. *Optimum is minimum put to maximum use!*

VI •••

GURU NANAK'S REVELATION

The discussion in this chapter attempts to show how Guru Nanak's Revelation differs both in nature and significance from all other known forms of revelation.

Guru Nanak's Revelation is an outstanding expression of Creative Mysticism, actively concerned as it is with "man's struggle to understand and cope with the predicament of his existence in the world and to achieve emancipation, enlightenment, and unity with the Absolute"—while laying unremitting "stress on his obedient response to the sovereign Word of God". The Guru Revelation, therefore, bridges the schism between different notions of revelation as prevalent in the Eastern and the Western religions, and underscores the notion of revelation in the specific sense of a divine self-communicating besides asserting that "everything/everyone falls within the sovereign jurisdiction of God's ineluctable Edict-Fiat (*Hukam*)".

But here the similarity of Guru Nanak's Revelation with many notions of revelation both in the Eastern and the Western religions doubtlessly ends. And his Revelation is *not* like any of the following:

- (a) "A process whereby the religious seeker, actuating his deeper spiritual powers, escapes from the world of change and illusion and comes into contact with ultimate reality" **(Hinduism)**.
- (b) "The gracious self-manifestation of the divine to those who open themselves in loving contemplation" (Bhakti, or devotional theism).

- (c) "An enlightenment gained through discipline and meditation" **(Buddhism)**.
- (d) "The transparency of the immanent divine principle or way" **(Taoism)**.
- (e) "The inspired words [of Moses and the Prophets who, as the chosen spokesmen, interpreted God's Will and purposes to the nation] to be accepted in loving obedience as the Word of God" (Judaism).
- (f) "As occurring primarily in the life, teaching, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, all interpreted by the apostolic witnesses under the illumination of the Holy Spirit" (Christianity).
- (g) "A declaration of God's Word rather than His personal selfdisclosure" (Islam).
- (h) "The difference between good [Truth] and evil [The Lie] and (thereby) to know the one true God" (Zoroastrianism).

Much to the contrary, Guru Nanak's Revelation is mystically-creative and creatively-mystical insofar as it exhorts man as a privileged human person [professor of *dur-labh-deh*, his hard-earned "mortal frame"] to take initiative and aspire for an inner life through God-orientation (*Gurmukh*) by transcending Mind-orientation (*Manmukh*). The validity, purpose, authenticity, and fulfilment of such an inspired life are ceaselessly tested on the anvil of workaday existence in terms of an unfaltering Name-contemplation (*Naam-Japna*), honest livelihood (*Kirat-Karna*), and sharing with the less-privileged (*Vand-Chhakna*). Life is a practical art that must be learnt by living it, and not by talking, hearing, or writing *about* it.

> ghaal khaiye kichh(u)hathon dei Nanak raah(u)pachhaanei sei (SGGS, p. 1245)

He who earns his living by the sweat of his brow Nanak, alone does the way (to salvation) know. Guru Nanak expands this aphorism into the concept of *seva* (service): socially-beneficent action as a way of life without soliciting any rewards, as a *sine qua non* of man's spiritual ascent. Here is his injunction on social service:

Jangam jodh jati sanyasi gur poorai veechaari bin(u) seva phal(u) na paavas seva karni saari (SGGS, p. 992)

The Master, perfectly endowed, has made me realise That of recluse, hero, celibate, and Sanyasi None can ever earn merit sans service: The quintessence of spiritual life

Guru Nanak's Revelation thus makes a radical departure from the teachings of other religion by unequivocally and unremittingly asserting the indispensability of good moral conduct as the launching ground for man's take-off to a flight into the realm of the higher, deeper, better, and fuller life.

Besides, Guru Nanak's Revelation differs from all known forms of revelation in several other respects: the depth of its mystical insight, the palpableness of its creative vitality, the universalness of its vision, the Comprehensivity of its approach to the problems of workaday existence, the holism of its progressional spirituality—above all, its impassioned concern actively engaged in the amelioration of the human condition. Following is an attempt to enumerate these hallmarks of the Guru's Revelation.

Personal Testimony of Revealed Word: Confiding in Lalo, a carpenter—whose lifestyle, grounded in honesty, hard work, and humility, he much admired—Guru Nanak himself testifies to his *Bani* as God's Word as revealed to him.

Jaise main aawai khasam kee Bani Taisda karee gyan vei Lalo (SGGS, p. 722)

As I receive (my) Bridegroom's Word So I impart (such) knowledge, O Lalo.

Addressing *Ik Oankar* as the Holy Bridegroom is a metaphor repeatedly used by the Guru in his Bani. Love of God is a bride's (human soul's) love for her bridegroom that she expresses in total (i.e., mental, moral, emotional, and bodily) surrender. Guru Nanak treats all human souls as the brides of the One Lord God. The freedom and happiness of the bride are consummated in loving adoration of, and unquestioning obedience to, the husband's will. Such a thought might be repulsive to the women-libbers but the fact remains that a women's life is best fulfilled in the love and protection which she receives from her husband through thick and thin within the confines and vicissitudes of a well-kept household. This fundamental averment of Guru Nanak also underscores the fact that his own *guru* is none other than God Himself. He has asserted and reiterated this truth repeatedly in his Bani, but for the consumption of the masses in another, though equally autonomous, way.

Vox Guru Vox Dei: The Voice of the Guru is the Voice of God. The reality of the two and their irrevocable relationship has been unequivocally expressed as follows:

> Sabad(u) guru Surat dhun chela (SGGS, p. 943)

The Guru is the Word, and disciple The Soul-consciousness tuned-in to it. Guru Nanak leaves no doubt as to this basic fact so that the seeker of Truth, rather than go astray, moves sure-footedly towards an inner life. The praxis of what conspires between the two is delineated with equal felicity of expression—which is also an affirmation of the foregoing averment.

> Amrit-vela sach naon vadiayi veechar [Japuji, pauri 4]

Contemplate the Glory of the True Name In the ambrosia-filled hours of pre-dawn

Sustained Seeing: Guru Nanak's Revelation is *not* a matter of intermittent supply of psycho-spiritual energy from The Source. It is the active silence of sustained seeing in an unbroken stillness of prayer and wonderment. That is why all his utterances have the flavour and aroma of Oven-hot freshness.

Bhang dhatoora surapaan utar jaaye parbhat Naam-khumaari Nanaka chari rahei din raat

All intoxicants loosen their grip (on the mind) by drawn But the Holy Name's euphoria (o'er it) forever lingers on.

That this is by no means an easy task has been explicitly stated as follows:

Aakhaan jeevan visrai mar jaaon Aakhan aukha saacha naon [SGGS, 349]

By uttering I live; in oblivion, die The True Name is by no means easy Thus, Name-Contemplation—in the context of the Bridegroom-Bride metaphor—is the spiritual orgasm the human soul (the Bride) experiences in Communion with her Divine Husband. This being so, the Bride has absolutely no craving to look for such climatic pleasure outside her own household: the self-sustaining Architecture of body, mind, and soul.

Humility is a major touchstone in Guru Nanak's Revelation. It calls for a willing (*not* imposed), total self-surrender. In the process, the mind is completely voided, and activised into palpable receptivity, not unlike the psychosomatic preparedness of the female body in foreplay proceeding sexual union. With all resistances removed, Humility becomes the superconductor for receiving spiritual energy transmitted by The Source in a state of joyous *Naam-simran*. Guru Nanak illustrates the indispensability of Humility by his own example.

Neechan andar neech jaat neechie hoo att neech(u) Nanak(u) tinkai sang-saath vadiya siyo kya rees Jithai neech samaaliyan tithai nadir teri bakhsees (SGGS, p. 15)

Lowest among the low castes, lower than the lowliest Nanak identifies with and dwells among them Those with worldly greatness he envies not Thy glance graces the place where the humble are cherished

That Guru Nanak's Humility is a Divine endowment, not as assiduously-cultivated virtue, is given by the fact that throughout his Bani he uses for himself the third and second person singular. This point is of crucial significance because in nearly all the great religions of the world their founders/proponents have used the first person singular—smacking of arrogance, albeit justifiable piety, inconsistent with Guru Nanak's revealed Creative Mysticism.

No Self-Avowed Preaching: Since Guru Nanak's was a Godassigned spiritual mission, he did not stand in need of any self-avowed preaching. As discussed before, his method was one of question-answer discourses—never of delivering sermons. In his case, therefore, words like "teachings", "preaching" are grossly misplaced. His was a Divinelydirected Creative Mysticism in which the excitement and illumination of the Revealed Word were expressed with an uncontrollable afflatus of artistic spontaneity. This means that, despite the hard-to-match majesty of his deeds, he took no personal credit for them.

> Hau dhaadi vIkaar(u) kaarai laaya Raat dihai kai vaar dhur(h)o furmaaya (SGGS, p. 150)

The Lord has taken me, the unoccupied bard, in His service And commanded in the very beginning that singing Always of His glory I should never comes amiss

World-Affirming Faith: At this crucial juncture, it is imperative to pin down the irrefutable veracity of Guru Nanak's Revelation. Apt is the use of architectural metaphor he uses to affirm this world as real (not Maya or illusion, as in Hinduism) so that what he insists on transmitting to all seekers of Truth assumes an inescapable practical significance. By implication, in my assessment, this should substantiate my notion that the Guru's Japuji is neither Mythology, nor Metaphysics, not even the Muse (poetry). It is quite simply, though not so obviously, the Architecture of Revealed Word: an incomparable edifice of (Satyam) truth, (Sundaram) beauty, and (Shivam) goodness. It imparts to the created world an aura of mystery and wonder: at once a transcendent and an immanent charm that becomes the staple spiritual diet of the seeker of Truth. Besides, while the Sole Creator Himself is beyond Time and Space, which are also His Own Creation, He mystically invests the created world with the autonomous-integrative elements of Time and Space. This curious Spacio-Temporal Architecture has for its roof the azure sky, for its walls the gold-splashed horizons, for its floor the verdant lap of Mother Earth-structured, supported, and

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sustained by *Dharma*: the irrevocable, inescapable, Cosmic Moral Law. The use of human (as against monumental) scale is noteworthy. It lends credence to Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism which asserts and reiterates, *ad infinitum*, that God responds warmly to human prayers and is eventually accessible to the earnest seeker who, in total selfsurrender, transmutes his soul into Lord God's loving bride.

> Ihu jag(u) sachei kee hai kothadi sachei ka vih vaa(u) (SGGS, p. 463)

This world is the True One's own hamlet And He himself dwells in it

Thus, anyone sensitively alive must respond, in a fit of aesthetic enchantment, to God's creation—*this* world—which pulsates with His many-splendoured Immanence.

Imbibing Fearlessness: Another index of Guru Nanak's Revelation is the fearlessness he imbibed by means of his direct connection with The Source. Fearlessness is, indeed, the most outstanding of the attributes of Ik Oankar-as enunciated by the Guru in Japuji's Mul Mantra. As God is the Sole Primal Person, He is absolutely without fear of any kind whatsoever. Since every human being is made in the image of God, he has this Divine quality, albeit dormant, within the deeper recesses of his soul. Having taken after the Sovereignty of God himself, man is unique as an individual human person-without a second. Thus, when he awakens this dormant truth within him through ceaseless Naam-Simran, he not only discovers his genetic uniqueness but also reinforces it by uncompromisingly leading an inner life. A point is then reached in such life when he becomes truly fearless-because he is convinced he has no peers in the world. Yet, this fearlessness is not foolhardiness. Nor is it wilful audacity, or self-conscious arrogance. It is quite simply a form of relaxed involution of self-renewing psycho-spiritual energy whose mystically-creative expression cannot but be Humility, i.e., Sahj (unconditioned spontaneity) that knows no malice.

This Divine attribute, Fearlessness, sets the individual absolutely free from the soul-crippling shackles of enmity, hatred, rancour, and malice. In this sense, man's moral strength is the weakness for speaking the truth at all costs, under all circumstances. Guru Nanak's lifestyle was a daring demonstration of this basic truth by virtue of which he would never desist from calling a space a space publically regardless of the awesome gravity of the given situation. Yet, he was never impolite or malicious or audacious. He was enabled to commit himself so heroically to upholding the Truth because the invigorating euphoria of Naam-Khumari gave him the rare courage to do so. However, he exercised this divine endowment to expose the hypocrisy and malpractices galore in his times. The following examples should suffice to illustrate the moot point involved.

> Saasat bed(u) na maanai koye Aapo aape pooja hoye... (SGGS, p. 951)

Nobody [even the Brahmin] believes in Shastras and Vedas All worship is in the pursuit of self-interest The Qazi arrogates to himself the right to dispense justice He plies his rosary, cries out God's name Yet, accepts bribe to rob the righteous When questioned, he rationalises (his misdeeds) via the Shariat The priests heed the Turks' dictate and lodge it in heart They carry tales against the people and have them fleeced He cleanses his minds by pantry ablutions Look! What's happened to the Hindu The matted-locks Jogi has besmeared his body with ash When his own son cries, deserted (back home) Lost to domestic duties, he hasn't achieved Yoga He has put himself to shame for no reason or rhyme Nanak, this is the order of the day in *Kaliyuga* That the evil-doer must also glorify the evil

Kal kaati raaje kaasayi dharm(u) pankh kar udariya... (SGGS, p. 145)

The Kaliyuga is the knife-wielder, the rulers are butchers And Dharma has taken wing In the fully dark night of falsehood The moon of truth cannot be seen rising any time, Anywhere Desperate is my search, though there is no way Out of this darkness Ego-entwined one weeps in utter grief Says Nanak: by what means shall one obtain emancipation.

Lab(u) paap(u) duye raja Mehta kood(u) hoa sikdaar... (SGGS, pp. 468-69)

Greed is the king, sin his minister Falsehood is the administrator And lust his deputy-they are always together In thought and word Blind subjects, bereft of knowledge, are the living dead The scholar is the dancing fool Beauty embellishes itself to seduce one and all They panegyrist cries himself hoarse Hailing the (un)heroic The unwise Pandit, fond of the good life Sermonises and offers alibis The religious (oblivious of Dharma) keeps losing merit But yet craves for salvation One who loves to be called celibate, a recluse Knows not the way, though he has abandoned his Household Everyone thinks himself to be perfect And accepts no disparagement Says Nanak: the testimonial of perfection Is earned in the hereafter When one's deeds are reckoned and rewarded.

Raje seech mukaddam kutte, jaye jaagayin baithe suttee... (SGGS, p. 1288)

The kings are lions, their village officials the hunting dogs Who go and disturb their subjects' peace During day and night The subordinates act as nails to gouge deep wound To draw out the victims' blood and marrow Which the rulers lustily lick like dogs

Yet, in spite of his unremitting intrepidity, Guru Nanak's heart was full of understanding compassion that he demonstrated in giving helpful counsel as everyone's true guide, philosopher, and friend. Dilating upon the quintessence of a true (not hypocritical) Musalmaan he spoke from the depths of his heart thus:

> Musalmaan kahaavan(u) muskal(u) jaa hoye taa Musalmaan(u) kahaavai (SGGS, p. 141)

Hard it is to earn the title of a (true) Muslim One truly such alone deserves to be so addressed His first deed is to love the way of the holy Second, to erase his mind's filth on the grindstone Who profess to be a Muslim guide must shed The illusion of death and life He must submit to God's will Obey the Lord, and efface his self Says Nanak: Such a one alone shall be A blessing for all And be reckoned as a true Muslim.

It is imperative to note that Guru Nanak is prodding the Muslim to live according to the dictates of Islam's quintessence. He is not at all interested—even remotely so—in converting the Muslim to *his* faith. *Such*

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unique catholicity is the immitigable spiritual strength of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, which has truly no parallel among the great religions of the world.

Guru Nanak makes here another charming attempt, among scores of such exercises aimed at helping the seeker of Truth—regardless of his sectarian and ethnic denominations, to raise the innocent Muslim above the torpor of ritualism and ceremonial piety which place so heavy a demand on his time, energy, and resources—everyday.

Here goes:

Mehr maseet sidak(u) musalla kah(u) halaal(u) Koran(u)... (SGGS, pp. 140-141) Let compassion for humanity be your mosque Contentment your prayer-rug Your Holy Koran honest and approved endeavour Modesty your circumcision And Ramadan fasting of noble conduct Thus shall you be a true Muslim Make good deeds your Kaaba Truthfulness your preceptor Your Kalima and Namaaz pious actions Let what pleases God be your rosary Thus shall you be honoured At the final reckoning Five are the (prescribed) prayers Five the stipulated hours to perform them Five their difference names What are the true prayers? The first is truthfulness The second, honest endeavour The third prayer offered to God for good of all The fourth is a sincere heart The fifth, divine laudation One, whose Kalima is good actions Is alone a true Muslim Says Nanak: All who are false within Are smeared with filth in the end

The most important point in the above enunciation is Guru Nanak's unequivocal emphasis on truthfulness (the indispensable qualification of a *sachiar*). By calling it the first Muslim prayer, he is only reinforcing his own Revelation's facile applicability to the human condition all over the globe, at all times—transcending sectarianism, ritualism, nationalism, and other "isms". The inference is crystal clear. *Though every human being is free to follow any religion or denomination, yet if his everyday deeds arte not regulated by Dharma, the Ineluctable Cosmic Moral Law, all his religiosity comes to grief*—eventually.

After he had received his Revelation. Guru Nanak's first proclamation was: "There is no Hindu, no Musalmaan ... " in his times, the vanquished and the victorious communities. The Muslims believe that those who believe in and follow Islam and Momins. Everyone else is a Kafir (infidel). But since Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is based on Dharma, there are only Gurmukhs (God-oriented) and Manmukhs (Mind-led). Hence he insists on conveying to all mankind the divinely-sanctioned Cosmic Moral Law (Dharma)—as the bedrock of spiritual life—regardless of all competitive, even self-exclusive, religious denominations. Since his own life bore an overwhelming eloquence of this evergreen faith, Guru Nanak stood in no need of either preaching or proselytization, or both. This basic truth is best substantiated in that he let the whiskwaver Bala (a low-caste Hindu) and the rebeck-player Mardana (a low-caste Muslim) continue following their respective faiths-their discomfiting disagreement with his own Revelation notwithstanding. In this sense, it is wrong to use the word "teaching" for Guru Nanak's Bani. The Revealed Word received by him is an open book to be read (and learnt from) by those who have mustered the courage of their own convictions in the complete denial of all that is false, superstitious, mythic, speculative, ritualistic, hypocritical, and irrational. The open freshness and uncompromising cosmopolitanism of his Bani appeal to human innocence, simplicity, and the dear delight of landing a life of voluntary poverty and socially-beneficent action and by its lyrical persuasion wins the seeker over to its universal-timeless tenets of Kirat Karna, Naam Japna, and Vand Chhakna-involved in which

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he works out his own salvation by making his body, mind, and soul unresisting instrument of *Ik Oankar's* Edict-Fiat.

Just as Dharma (The Cosmic Moral Law) is the unshakable foundation of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, its redoubtable superstructure is an unalterable Monotheism. This Monotheism, however, is not exactly like what is met with in Judaism and Islam-with a personified yet transcendent God, Jehovah or Allah. By it is meant the One Supreme Being, Ik Oankar, in two aspects: unattributed-transcendent, Par-Brahma-the inaccessible and unknowable Truth, changeless Reality, beyond Maya, and the attributed-immanent-operating in the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the Universe through His Maya [manifest makebelieve Time-Space Continuum], Lila [Divine Sport redolent with God's all-pervasive divinity], or Qudrat [His matchless might]. In the attributed-immanent aspect, Ik Oankar is Himself the upholder of Dharma, the ethical élan of the Universe, and the fountainhead of all creation, and psycho-spiritual values. In each of these two aspects, however, the Supreme Being is the only One, without a second, Formless [Nirankar, Nirakaar], beyond Time-Space Continuumand thus beyond incarnation and morality. How God is in, and yet beyond the Universe simultaneously forms the mind-boggling mystery of His Inscrutable Will. Such words as Niranjan (untainted by Maya) and Nirbaan (emancipated) describe this unique attribute of Ik Oankar. And yet when God, by His own Will and Grace, unravels this mystery to an earnest seeker, the latter is struck by the inebriate fantasy of an eternal wonder (Vismaad).

Soul's Magnetic Needle: Guru Nanak's monumental Monotheism with its uncompromising insistence on the Indivisible Oneness and Absolute Sovereignty of *Ik Oankar*: the Sole Supreme Being—infallibly acts as the magnetic needle for the seeker of Truth. Such a notion fits the Guru's masterly metaphor for Divinity like a glove. The seeker's soul is the mariner who navigates the *Bhavjal* [the ocean of Maya]: this spacio-temporal existence with the sole and sure help of the magnetic needle that Guru Nanak's Monotheism provides. Through fair weather and foul, it always points towards the *Naam-Pole* of *Ik Oankar*, and guides the seeker in moving in the direction of his ultimate Destination: The Sach Khand. This moot point cannot be overstressed, lifting as it does effortlessly, above all metaphysical disputations and variant myths, the pragmatic Spirituality inherent in the irrefutable religiosity of Dharma: The Cosmic Moral Law. In Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, therefore, practical (not Mythical or speculative) Goodness (ethics) becomes the indispensable means of attaining Truth (the object of Metaphysics)—and Beauty (the object of aesthetic)—the dear delight of experiencing for oneself the progressional ascent of the soul to a higher realm of life. In its unambiguous enunciation of the Principle upholding the moral élan of the Universe, the Guru's spiritual recipe saves the time, energy, and resources which the seeker would otherwise fruitlessly expend on ratiocinative cerebration provoked by conflicting "isms". Guru Nanak affirms God's Indivisible and Immutable Divinity this:

> Iko dharm(u) dridai sach(u) koyi (SGGS, p. 1188)

For the practitioner of Truth, there is but one Religion.

Lifelong involvement in socially-beneficent action, *not* escape from this-worldly reality, is the ultimate touchstone of Guru Nanak's Revelation as manifest in his Creative Mysticism. Neither pious intentions nor erudite discourses would eventually avail in the pursuit of Truth. Deeds, dedicated to the Almighty Father and aimed pointedly at the amelioration of the human condition, alone would help the seeker in his spiritual ascent. In such a state of total self-surrender, yet fruitful active endeavour, lies the role of social service. Thus, *seva*—the most important tenet of Guru Creative Mysticism—is, in reality, the pragmatic application of Humility to the unremitting challenges of workaday existence, which provoke one to be arrogant!

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Guru Nanak's injunctions on seva are as under:

Jete jee(a) tete sabh(i) tere vin(u) sewa phul(u) kise naahi (SGGS, p. 354)

> Although all creatures are thine, yet None is ever fulfilled without service

Jangan jodh jati sanyasi gur(i) poorai veechari Bin(u) sewa phal(u) kabh(u) na paavas sewa karni saari (SGGS, p. 992)

Enlightened by the Master, perfectly endowed, may I surmise

Recluse, hero, celibate or *Sanyasi*—absolutely none May expect to earn spiritual merit sans service In which lies the essence of all deeds human.

> Gur seva bin(u) bhagat(i) na hoyi Anek jatan kare jo koyi (SGGS, p. 1342)

Without dedicating service to the Guru Bhakti is never done However hard one may try Any mode of devotion

It is noteworthy that Guru Nanak, as is his wont, makes his assertion without being impolite or overbearing. His is holy activism just the same, directed against all forms of ceremonial piety and outlandish asceticism.

He underscores his moot print by showing that it is *not* enough for man to live up to this outstanding advantage by serving God's creatures actively. By alluding to the futile pursuits of recluses, celibates, heroes, and *sanyasis*, he has substantiated the validity and veracity of a householder's life as a ground for divinised activism.

No Conflict between Reason and Faith: Venerable Holism is the hallmark of Guru Nanak's creative Mysticism—refreshingly sanctified by his inseverable connection with The Source through ceaseless *Naam-Simran*.

In the ultimate analysis, it boils down to two things: Man being an organic whole must use all his faculties in conjunction with one another; and He must always ensure the integration of Body, Mind, and Soul in all his thoughts, words, and deeds. Apparently exercise of one faculty in preference to the other(s) unavoidably leads to distortions of perception. Only a well-balanced amalgam of materiality (body), mentality (mind), and ethereality (soul) is a befitting use of Durlabh Deh (hard-won mortal frame): the most prized Divine endowment that has fallen to a human being's lot after millions of births in lower forms of life. By implication, all those who use only Reason (and get entangled in Metaphysical disputations), or only Emotion (for Poetry and other art-forms), or only Imagination (for Myth-making and superstition-mongering), are compelled to give up innumerable fragments for the sake of life's fullness. In Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, all these faculties are used thus: Reason in contemplating the Glory of the Holy Name; Emotion in loving devotion to God's Sovereignty; and Imagination in singing panegyrics to Him in a state of insatiable wonder. Above all, Intuition-which melds all these faculties into the quick-silver ability of instant illuminationpulsates through Sahj (unconditioned spontaneity) as its life-force. It is imperative to understand this context to fully appreciate why Guru Nanak insists that the seeker of Truth must also, among others, use his faculty of discrimination-thereby resolving for himself the apparent conflict between Faith and Reason. The Guru's exhortation:

> Akli sahib(u) seviai akli paayiai maan(u) Akli parh kai bujhiyai akli keechai daan(u) Nanak(u) aakhai raah(u) ih(u) hor(i) galla saitaan(u)

(SGGS, p. 1245)

Let by Reason Lord be served And honour won eventually Reason alone illuminates study, And leads to insight By Reason must one dispense charity Says Nanak: This is the only true way In all other means, the Satan leads astray. The Purity-Probity Nexus: Guru Nanak fashions out a noumenal nexus between Purity (of conduct as a precondition) and Probity (aim of man's spiritual quest) to dispose of all others forms of praxis for emancipation, enlightenment, and salvation as of little merit. His injunction is:

> Kah(u) Nanak sach(u) dhyayiai Such hovai taa sach(u) paayiai (SGGS, pp. 471-72)

Says Nanak: On Truth though attention be fixed-maintained By Purity alone can Truth be attained

Truthful Living Exalted: For gaining an access to the inner life of the Spirit, Guru Nanak conclusively commends an everyday life of truthfulness over any of the extraordinary forms of ascetic or monastic life which negates this-worldliness as illusion or soul-contaminating. So much so that he places truthful life at a pedestal higher than that of Truth itself. *This is a signal sacrament of Guru Nanak's Revelation—offered to all the peoples of the world by the Grace of The Merciful Father.* In the following utterance, he brings out the sacrosanct principle worthy of human life with great succinctness:

Sach(hu) urai sabh(u) ko upar(i) sach(u) aachaar(u) (SGGS, p. 62)

Truth is the highest of all—but, in fact Higher than Truth is truthful conduct

Guru Nanak's Revelation is distinguished by his repeated unequivocal assertion and reiterative exposition of Divinity. All his hymns invariably end up by what I like to term involutionary proclamation and affirmation of *Ik Oankar* as the Sole Primal and Ultimate Reality.

There is thus absolutely no room for Trinity or Incarnation(Avatara) of any kind whatsoever.

His forthright pronouncement on *Avatara-Vaad*: the Hindu theory of Divine incarnation is as follows:

So much(u) jalao jit(u) kahai thakur(u) joni (SGGS, p. 1136)

Fie upon the mouth that utters God is incarnate!

Similarly, he disposes of with characteristic flourish the question of Trinity:

Brahma Bisan(u) Mahes ik moorat aape karta kaari (SGGS, p. 1136)

God alone is Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—all Three-in-One And He Himself is the creator (of the Universe) and (its) Operator Elsewhere, again, he asserts (probably in response to a question as to which of the six systems of

Indian philosophy is the best) with a stroke of finality:

Chhi(a) ghar chhi(a) gur chhi(a) updes Gur(u) gur(u) eko ves anek (SGGS, p. 1136)

Six are the systems of (Indian) philosophy Six are their *gurus* (founders) And six are (thus) the schools of thought But (at bottom) the Guru of these gurus is One Though His manifestations be Many Guru Nanak concludes this hymn with an irrefutable (because it is scientific) concrete example as under:

Sooraj eko rut(i) anek Nanak karte ke kete ves (ibid)

Many are the seasons, though the Sun is one In myriad guises appears, Nanak, the Author of Creation

It is imperative to point out that Guru Nanak neither condemns nor denies other *gurus*' points of view. Bur asserts, just the same, the inescapability of God's Indivisible Sovereignty as The One Sole Source of the many-splendouredness of all creation.

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing quotes are only illustrative, *not* (by any means) exhaustive, examples from Guru Nanak's Bani which sets his Revelation apart from all known forms of the Eastern and Western Revelation. In the examples cited is embodied an all-inclusive applicability of Revealed Truth to everything that one encounters in everyday human life—and its (apparently irresolvable) predicament: Society, state, superstitions; Religion, rituals, rites; *Dharma*, duties, discretions; Aspirations, aims, actions. The many-splendouredness of this Revelation has such facts as the breathtaking beauty of its artistic form; the amazing reach of its crusading belligerence; the deceptive simplicity of its divinised cosmopolitanism; its compelling persuasion for continual soulsearching—above all, Guru Nanak's self-abnegating insistence that all that he has said is God's Own Word, *not* his mind-made scripture. He admits of no middle-men, including himself, between *Ik Oankar* and the earnest seeker of Truth—for such is the Divine Will.

Be that as it may, one thing is crystal clear. Guru Nanak's Bani convincingly corroborates the plain truth that Revelation is a valid means of (*direct*) knowing—which is the result of divine tutelage that no university education can ever provide!

VII

GURU NANAK'S CREATIVE MYSTICISM: AN ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE

Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism have been examined as manifest in his Bani, especially in terms of the Architecture of his Japuji, we may now formulate the conclusions which emerge from this study.

Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism lays the foundation for a nondenominational, non-communal, non-sectarian, non-ethnic system of Holistic Humanism whereby anyone and everyone is urged to an optimistic View and a fulfilling Way of Life. Struck by its inebriate wonder, the seeker is persuaded to live according to the dictates of Dharma, The Divinely Designed Cosmic Moral Laws, without the need for clerical mediation or creedal defections. An appeal to his Reason is constantly made so that the Sikh develops a discriminating understanding of the why's and wherefore's of workaday existence. He is encouraged to develop his own dormant powers into endowments of his Spiritual Sovereignty. He is enabled to appreciate that the Spiritual Art of Living is the highest form of Creativity which must be lived to be believed. Emphasis on Action, grounded in simran (Divine-Remembrance) and seva (Altruistic Progression) should awaken the seeker's Soul-Consciousness (Surat) to the Celestial Melody (Anhad) of God's Word (Shabda) and sustain thereafter his unrelenting quest for Salvation-in-Flesh (Jiwan Mukti).

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A Sikh is *not* a ruler. He is created to be a servant of all humanity without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, gender, colour, or race. And yet he rules the world by winning over everyone's heart and love, humanness, compassion, and selfless service. The victory over the Mind is the victory over the World. Because in such true triumph alone can the Self regain its SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY in its pristine glory. In that state of God-oriented inner life the five formidable foes—*kaam* (lust), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (attachment), *Ahankar* (pride) finally acquiesce into celestial imperturbability. When one has found The Source, the ontological meanderings of the Mind, fired and fuelled by the stated enemies, are fulfilled in the placid timelessness of an inner life.

"Sikh" is a creative simplification of the Sanskrit word "Shishya", which means disciple or student. The term 'Sikh' is often interpreted to mean a disciple in Sanskrit, but actually it derives its origin from Pali and means-the elect, or in Sikh parlance, chosen (by God), God's own. However, the main requirements of being an earnest student are: HUMILITY (not self-pity about one's lack of knowledge), the desire to learn (from everyone, everything, everywhere, and all the time), receptivity (willing attention to whatever is said or seen or done), progression (as an index of slow and steady (Sahj) illumination), mystical gumption (knowledge not as memorised quotes, but instant knowing transcending the conventional modes of sensation, perception, and cognition), and creative reconstruction (choices made by the use of one's sense of discrimination in the application of knowledge to effective/ fruitful social service). It should be obvious that such a student (in full command of his senses) cannot be misled by anything, anyoneincluding his own outbursts of self-aggrandisement or self-gratification.

A Sikh's view and way of life is "choiceless (i.e., *not* motivated by selfishness) inner seeking in the pursuit of education which illuminates by reflection (*Vichaar*) and fulfils by socially-beneficent action (*Seva*). For him, Truth is an immanent Reality—in eternal Progression through Evolution—that manifests itself in ever-improved forms of life. His religion is non-sectarian, non-communal, and non-denominational. It is the identification, acceptance, and enactment of *Dharma*, the All-Pervasive Cosmic Moral Law. Such a Truth cannot be indoctrinated,

much less dogmatised or institutionalised. Hence, a Sikh's catholic open-mindedness and celebration of Life as *Charhdi Kala* (spirits forever in the Ascendant).

Flowing as they do effortlessly (*Sahj*) from Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism, the following Principles/Axioms/Aphorisms may be formulated:

- 1. God is One Indivisible Reality untainted by the empirical reality of cause and effect *mystically* operating in/through His Creativity, Creation, and Creatures;
- 2. Despite God's Immanence in the world created by Him, He is yet a Transcendent Being;
- 3. God is the Primal Person—Omnipotent (All-Powerful), Omniscient (All-knowing), Omnipresent (Present everywhere at the same time)—Himself performing the three basic functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction *absolutely* without advice or assistance of any Deity whatsoever;
- 4. *Ik Oankar* is His *exclusive* Name, among His countless appellations, suggestive both of His Transcendent Uniqueness and Immanent Many-Splendoured Multi-Formity;
- 5. There is no opposition between Faith and Reason;
- 6. God's Creativity, Creation, and Creatures are a Mystical testimony to the fact that All Phenomena are essentially creative and therefore dynamic (*not* static)—*eternally*;
- 7. Consequently, not only all doctrinal orthodoxy is abandoned but also all static positions like rituals, rites, sacraments, customs, ceremonies—including adherence to classical languages, are rejected.
- 8. God is Truth, the world (as his creation) is *real* (not illusory) and a Divinely-Ordained place (*Dharamsaal*) for minting Spiritual money required for the soul's *Ascent* (i.e., vertical journey) to the Realm of Truth (*Sach Khand*);
- 9. Both the cyclical (involution) and linear (evolution) processes of the Phenomenal World are stressed in the architectonics of Cause and Effect, thereby recovering the individual's quintessential organic identity as soul-intellect-mind-body unity forever in a flux of *Progression* in Time-Space Continuum;

- 10. Ego, as an index and an imperative of human creativity, is not condemned. It is turned into a useful tool by reorienting it from Body-consciousness (*Haumai*) to Soul-consciousness (*Surat*) through the rigours of *simran*, as a fertile ground for Altruistic Progression of the seeker's life;
- 11. The indispensability of Ethical Conduct (*sachiar*) is concretised in the axiomatic assertion that *Truthful Life* is higher than Truth;
- 12. Consequently, all forms of Neutralisation of, and Escape from, life are discountenanced—and the seeker exhorted to live in the midst of workaday existence with all its storms of joys and sorrows, hopes and despairs, fulfilments and frustrations which—by virtue of Soul-consciousness (*Surat*) being in tune with The Divine Word (*Shabda*)—are rendered equally palatable as God's Own (Sweet) Will;
- 13. Since God is Unknowable by anyone, anything, any means whatsoever, the infructuous pursuit of Mythology, Metaphysics, Self-Mortification, Yoga-Praxis, is forthrightly rejected, and the seeker counselled to devote his time, money, and energy in making an honest living, sharing the earnings with the less-privileged, and *Naam*-contemplation—till he is quality-marked by The Maker as a fit soul for receiving His Grace for Divine Knowledge (*Brahma Jnana*) and Salvation (*Mokh Dwar*);
- 14. The Esoteric is made *accessible* to the Laity at all times, at all places, without the (misleading) mediation of the clergy, by introducing highly-simplified Axioms, which can be fully grasped without any exegesis such as the following examples would be illustrate:
 - a) ghaal khaiye kichh(u) hath(u) dei nanak raah(u) pachhaanaih sei

(SGGS, p. 1245)

b) hukamai andar sabh(u) ko baahar Hukam na koye nanak Hukamai jei bujhai ta haumai kahai na koye

(Japuji, pauri 2)

c) karmee aawai kapde nadaree mokh(u) dwaar(u) nanak eiwai jaaneeai sabh(u) aapei sachiaar(u)

[Japuji, pauri 4]

d) aayee panthee sagal jamaatee man(i) jeetei jag(u) jeet

[Japuji, pauri 27]

e) weil na paayeea pandatee ji hovai leikh(u) puraan(u) wakhat(u) na paaiyo kaadeeya ji likhan(i) leikhu kuraan(u) thiti waar(u) na jogi jaanai rut(i) maah(u) na koyi ja karta sirthee kao saajei aapei jaanai soyi

[Japuji, pauri 21]

15. Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is humanly equipped to enter into interactive Communication and Camaraderie with any Faith which is based on ethical excellence, Holistic Humanism, civilised discourse, and pragmatic spirituality.

It neither preaches, nor proselytises—much less does it commend preaching or proselytization. Its unflinching exhortation is to practise. The Three-Prolonged Faith of Timeless-Universal Validity, Verity, and Applicability to the unending process of making sense out of Man, his situation, his predicament, and his Soul's nameless yearnings for an existential fulfilment—*here* and *now*.

- 16. Humility and politeness (civility) are exalted as the quintessence of all virtues and good qualities;
- 17. The seeker is impelled into active involvement in the ups and downs of life through an unrelenting socially-beneficent action (idealised in the Householder's Life) whereby "Work is Worship" is transformed into "Work is no mere Worship: It is a whole Salvation";
- 18. The underdog and the lowly are rescued from the tyranny of socioeconomic, politico-cultural, and moral exploitation—and imparted a liberated sense of human dignity;
- 19. Self-indulgence as well as asceticism is discarded—and the seeker introduced to a fuller, deeper, broader, and higher life divinising his latent powers through the three-pronged formula: *Kirat Karo, Vand Chhako*, and *Naam Japo*;
- 20. The honour, virtue, and worth of Woman are restored in the succinct averment: "so kiyon manda aakhiye jit jamaih rajaan";
- 21. Equality of human beings is asserted by showing that social status, privileged birth, caste-proudness, and official position are worthless

unless one's life is regulated according to the three-pronged formula noted before;

- 22. Dharma (The Inviolable Cosmic Moral Law) not Religion (as institutionalised, indoctrinated Belief, or socially divorced fidelity, or dogmatised system of rites, rituals, worship, etc, or monastic order, or scholastic life) being the forthright foundation of Spiritual quest, the organic unity of "thought, word, and deed" is re-established by aligning *thought* with *Ik Oankar* (*Simran*), *word* with ethical conduct (*Aachaar*), and *deed* with socially-beneficent action (*Seva*);
- 23. God's Divine Dispensation is invoked by a total surrender of the Soul-Bride to the eternal care of the Sole Bridegroom;
- 24. Service, rendered in trance-like remembrance of *Ik Oankar*, brimful with all materiality and mentality, is exalted to a state of Spiritual Sovereignty, whereby Salvation becomes available to one and all regardless of caste, colour, gender, creed, class, or calling;
- 25. Superstitions about impiety, untouchability, and other social taboos are extirpated by tracing their origin to ignorance and inertia (strengthened and sustained by priests for personal and professional advantage)—and the seeker exhorted to a self-sufficient inner life as noted before; and
- 26. The seeker with his Soul-consciousness, (*Surat*) in trance-like tune (*Dhun*) with The Holy Word (*Shabda*), stands in no need whatsoever of a "mediated system of salvation", and is, therefore, never a *Beggar* but a *Benefactor* of his fellow beings.

ASSESSMENT

In the light of the inference drawn in the last chapter, a critical evaluation of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism may now be made. Sharing his Revelation with the world at large, Guru Nanak has proclaimed at the very outset—in Japuji's *Mool Mantra* that God, in his Attributive Form as *Karta Purakh*, can be accessed only by *Japu* (Prayer-chant), an endless exercise of "naming" Him until the Guru (the dormant Divine Word lodged within the seeker's Soul) is awakened to receive His grace. *Simran*, in this context, is constant contemplation, for its own sake—so that God-remembrance, as life-illuminating energy, becomes a habit of the mind. When the seeker moves on to this state of mind, he actually attains to *Sahj* (unconditioned spontaneity) when thought, word, and deed meld into Creative Mysticism: the art, science, technique, and philosophy of Holistic Living.

Thus, though, *Simran* is the simplest of all forms of *Yoga*, it yet makes serious and persistent demands on the intentions, activities, time, and energy of the seeker. It is like learning to drive an ultrahi-tech vehicle on the steep and narrow highway of Spirituality. A moment's inattention would mean a total relapse into oblivion. Hence the need for *Sahj* so that the whole exercise may become effortlessly easy—when conscious endeavour strains the psycho-somatic engine no more, and spiritual fuel is not consumed for nothing.

It need hardly be stressed that the main aim of *Japu* is the integration of Body, Mind, and Soul into an organic whole—activated by a direct connection with The Source. When that aim is accomplished,

the seeker becomes a willing and an effective instrument of God's Edict-Fiat: *Hukam* acting through the seeker makes *Ik Oankar's* Immanence a palpable reality—haloed by the psycho-spiritual aura of His (Ineffable) Transcendence. Then, the seeker is no longer enticed by the make-believe microcosm of his "Ego". He is held aloft, in a state of immitigable euphoria, by the prop of the Holy Name, in the macrocosm of the Over-Self in which are subsumed all egos big and small—stricken by the inebriation that the dissolution of the seeker's self-imposed captivity automatically brings about.

It should be clear that *Naam-Simran* is neither mindless parroting of a *mantra*, nor mechanical repetition of God's name(s). It is quite simply a self-rewarding Holistic activity indulged in by the seeker, during workaday existence, with loving adoration of *Ik Oankar's* Attributes, unquestioning submission to His Edict-Fiat, and grateful HUMILITY at His Grace. In sum, the seeker is eventually cast in the mould of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism—as a transformed entity, integrating his Body, Mind, and Soul—along with his thought, word, and deed—into the signal Act of (*divinised*) Creation.

Thus, *Naam*-contemplation, which the Guru so consistently commends, is actually an exercise in re-aligning one's energies by a willing surrender to God's Inexorable Edict-Fiat (*Hukam*) whose validity, intention, and operation are inextricably embodied in the Inscrutability of Divine Will (*Raza*). *Naam Japna*—a perpetual, prayerful, and love-exuding, remembrance of God—is a highly simplified form of Worship which needs no priestly intercession whatsoever and, therefore, lies within the ready reach of the teeming millions.

Willing self-surrender, not costly gifts, is the best offertory service at the Altar of Truth. Sharing one's honest earnings with the lessprivileged—not holding conferences on human welfare—is the best sacrament which alone pleases the Merciful Father. And contemplation of the Holy Name, in the midst of workaday existence—not bathing at holy places—is the best ablutionary preparation for communion with *Ik Oankar*.

Yet all this is too deceptively simple to practise. For what Guru Nanak is tacitly asking the Sikh (disciple of the Guru embodied in the
Word that is lodged within his own Mind) is total Self-surrender i.e., the giving up of everything that he has. This is by no means a simple task, for it is controlled by man's Ego: the most formidable of the fiver inner foes-the other four being Lust, Anger, Greed, and Attachment. The Ego has the facile faculty of identifying (to the point of possessing it) with everything: persons, places, things, events, ideas, ideals, ideologies, myths, beliefs, superstitions, omens, predictions, and what have you. Above all, it self-creates a hard-to-dispel fear in one's Mind that without it one would be worth nothing at all. Yet, Ego must never be repressed, much less killed. The multitude of meditation techniques developed by time-honoured seers is of no avail. At worst, the endless repetition of meaningless mantras (so-called master-words sanctified by ancient proponents/practitioners) bores the Mind into uncreative dullness. At best, such a technique of spurious meditation is tantamount to constantly feeding the neighbour's bulldog on sausages to silence its incessant barking. Nor can Mythology come to one's rescue, for the mythic account of the victory of Good over Evil which it promotes is far removed from the social context and its historical time. And neither can Metaphysics explain away the human predicament by recourse to clever erudition. Not even Poetry (the Muse) can help the afflicted Soul, for it tends to lure it away from the problem at hand into the fantasy of metaphor, imagery, and lyricism.

Guru Nanak commends an innocent, youthful Mind which is continually energised by the Over-Self through the superconductor of Humility: Total Surrender of the Self. This comes about by re-orienting the Ego from *Manmukh* (Mind-directed) life to *Gurmukh* (Guru-directed) life by the practice of the three-pronged praxis delineated before.

The very fact that so complete a denial of everything is a precondition for a Life of the Spirit, few can accomplish such an uphill task. Guru Nanak's Sahj is a grim pointer to his mystically-creative optimism embodied in his belief in man's slow but sure evolution—of which the present crowning glory is the human vesture man has received as a reward for the good deeds in innumerable lower forms of life over inordinate aeons of time. Man's future crowning glory—as a befitting index of his Durlabh Deh (rare-gift human-vesture)—will be witnessed only when he has given

up as futile, fully, and finally, all pursuits in fields of the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology.

When the **Humanities** (all philosophies, social sciences, etc.) will have explained everything it could—yet *not* quite; when **Art** (dance, drama, music, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.) will have expressed everything it could—yet *not* quite; when **Science** will have explored everything it could—yet *not* quite; when **Technology** will have captured all the planets in the Solar System—yet given up in despair of surfeit; then and then alone would Humankind's selfexhausted Ego turn to Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism for the panacea of its many incurable ills.

All the living races of Humankind as they exist in the world of today belong to one species, *Homo sapiens* (from Latin *Homo*: man and *sapiens*: wise, possessing intelligence). This name expresses the fact that man is distinguished from other members of the animal kingdom, and more especially from the members of his own order and family—which include monkeys and the great apes—by the possession and habitual exercise of the specific quality of being able to *reason*.

No wonder why Guru Nanak tenaciously insists on the holistic use of intelligence i.e., discriminating Reason for a variety of human activities.

Akli sahib(u) sewiai akli paayiei maan(u)... (SGGS, p. 1245) By exercising discriminating Reason one serves Lord God By discriminating is one honoured Reason is the bedrock of study That leads to insight and understanding Even charity is the expression of Reason Says Nanak: This (Reason) alone is the (true) way Everything else is Satan's (misleading) inducement

But however fondly one may wish, or however hard one may try to justify, the sordid fact remains that human beings are, more often than not, a prey to their own inner foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride (LAGAP which reads, in reverse, as PAGAL, vernacular word for MAD). Since everyone suffers from notions of grandeur and glory occasioned by delusions of habitually exercising the faculty of intelligence—despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary in everyday transaction of human business—it is Providential, if amusing, that the word PAGAL should be read in reverse. It makes everyone feel, though totally without rhyme or Reason, that everyone else is MAD—which enables one to shift the blame on others for all that goes wrong in the world every day. With its characteristic stress on Reason, Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism sets man apart as the *only* class of living creatures capable of leading a life worthy of the *Homo sapiens'* unique position in the ongoing process of Evolution. That man is, at best, an "urban barbarian" (for *not* exercising his Reason) is quite another, though!

According to one scientific estimate, the *Homo sapiens* species is perhaps 250,000 years old. Comparing artificial intelligence with human intelligence, Isaac Asimov writes in his book, *New Guide to Science* (p. 802): "It may be that the measure of human intelligence involves such subtle qualities as insight, intuition, fantasy, imagination, creativity—the ability to view a problem as a whole and guess the answer by the "feel" for the situation. If that is so, then human beings are very intelligent, and computers are very unintelligent indeed. Nor can we see right now how this deficiency in computers can be easily remedied, since human beings cannot program a computer to be intuitive or creative for the very good reason that we do not know what we ourselves do when we exercise these qualities."

An implicit, albeit reluctant, acceptance o the limits of human perfectibility is indicated by the scientific view quoted above. The mystery and majesty of Ultimate Truth, as reflected in the mirror of inner life, cannot be fully known to the human Soul. Just the same, the fleeting glimpse that it catches, in a fitful flash of self-realisation, of The Hidden Splendour convinces it of the validity and veracity of a life divinised—and thus made self-sustaining—by NAAM-Contemplation that awakens and fuels the dormant powers of the Soul. That is the starting point for the seeker to dedicate his life (as a precious gift of God) to the service of His creation through socially-beneficent action. It may be conceded that no action can benefit anyone, much less society at large, if it is not funded by the fruits of an honest livelihood. Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism is thus an unremitting exhortation to the seeker to sanctify his faculties of perception, cognition, and knowledge by re-orienting his ego God-ward-by hearkening the Shabda (i.e., Guru, the Holy preceptor), lodged within his own Mind, through the inner ears of his Soul-consciousness (Surat), and firmly-fixing it in all the three states of lived experience: wakefulness, dreams, deep sleep. This is a precondition, a passionate preparedness, to the attainment of the fourth state: Turiya, where Sahj (unconditioned spontaneity) sprouts, grows, and blooms as effortlessly (and assuredly) as lotus in muddy water. In other words, the seeker thus recovers his natural (i.e., vulnerable, innocent, uninhibited, creative) state, melding Soul, Mind, and Body into an organic whole. Regaining his psycho-spiritual health, he willingly jumps into the throes of life-enjoying every bit of it as God's blessing—to become part of an immense kinship with the beauty of Evolution-seeing which God Himself, the Carefree, exults in its Progressional fullness (Nanak, vigsai veparvahu-pauri 3, Japuji).

Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism rejoices in its divinised state of being unchangeably optimistic, uncompromisingly life-affirming, and incomparably simple. In the euphoria of its aesthetic enchantment, the human Soul sings always of Transcendence as the heartbeat of Immanence grounded in workaday existence. While seeing clearly the wickedness and terror of the world, it invokes God's Glance of Grace for a fleeting Glimpse of His Edict-Fiat so that the evil is transmuted into beauty by helping the seeker to carry on his assigned task against all odds. By contemplating the Holy Name, the human Soul hums to itself the Song Divine, so that those coming in contact with it may *overhear* the life-sustaining lyrics: All *is* well, for God Himself is the Author of such a Creative Mysticism.

The Japuji, within the larger context of Guru Nanak's Bani, makes a transreligious appeal to the individual human person to regain his wholeness, without which no machinations of the ambition-maddened Mind, however clever and numerous, will ever avail. This Revealed Word challenges the seeker to a life-long combat with his own formidable foes: lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride—which he must tame by invoking that which his maverick ambition so wistfully longs to possess. If the seeker is earnest, he will readily read the writing on the wall beyond the selflacerating lure of the mesmeric charm of Mythology, the subtle mystique of Metaphysics, and the evanescent entertainment of the Muse—and promptly act for his own sake. Guru Nanak's Bani is an open Book to be read and acted upon—*without* the intercession of interpreters. It is the Bible of Holistic Humanism hallowed by God's Grace.

Nearing the Journey's End

Now that you have been through with me on this strange odyssey into Guru Nanak's Spiritual Kingdom-it shouldn't be too hard for you to appreciate, like I do, that the Holy Personage has been born ten millennia too early for ready usefulness of Manmukhs. After all the human beings will have expended their energies, generation after generation, over the next ten thousand years, in search of Truth-to the point of an utter exhaustion, Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism will be re-born in a beauteous blush of bounteous benefaction for giving Humankind a fresh start for Homo sapiens' ultimate adventure into the realm of the Spirit. Then, this planet Earth will regain its pristine glory of Dharamsaal for man's tryst with the Sach Khand of Ik Oankar. Then, and then alone, will Beauty tiptoe into everyone's heart spreading the splendour of Truth in the pulsating ambience of the Commonwealth of Goodness-the Universal Soil for the sprouting and growth of Sachiars. The lifestyle of a Sachiar veers round deeds sown in the Soil of Dharma, whereby he becomes a fit and deserving human being to receive Ik Oankar's Grace for his spiritual ascent: the consummation of his Durlabh Deh.

Epilogue

Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism initiates, invigorates, and sustains a live-wire trialogue among the three human faculties of **Reason**, **Emotion**, and **Imagination**—all consummated in **Intuition**: the superior faculty of *instant* seeing with the inner eye. Reason is metamorphosed into Logic of the Soul, Emotion fuels Psychic Devotionalism, and Imagination astral-travels in the Realm of Wonder in aesthetic enchantment occasioned by the Mystic beauty and bounty of Creator, Creature, and Creation. Their melding into Intuition takes place under the white heat of *Bhay* (fear) transmuted into *Bhau* (love) burning, in the process, all the dross of "I"-making (*Ahankar*), ending in the stainless mettle of Humility. Intuition prepared the psychosomatic, ethical-spiritual ground for the sprouting and growth of *Sahj* (unconditioned spontaneity) which is indispensable to the leading of a Life of Holistic (i.e., deeper, higher, healthier, and fuller) Humanism.

Guru Nanak has distilled his Creative Mysticism into the three interdependent mutually-enriching tasks of *Kirat Karna* (earning an honest livelihood), *Naam Japna* (contemplation of the Holy Name), and *Vand Chhakna* (sharing one's earnings with the underdog). This is a radical departure from the self-indulgence of the Egotist—in three W's: Wine, Wealth, and Women which are self-consuming leading to the reveller's rueful ruin—to a new self-consummating trio: Work, Worship, Welfare or Weal, an unconditioned involvement which triggers the Self's Spiritual Ascent (i.e., vertical journey) onto the Over-Self, The Source.

The resolution of all the conflicts of the subjective world of the individual human person with the objective world of places, things, and events comes about in the cleansing of the Mind in the Laundry of God's Fear, with the Divine Detergent of His Holy Name. What might appear to be a perplexing paradox is, at bottom, a process of Progressional encapsulation of all mental fears into One Fear. Contemplating the Holy Name of the Only Fearless One subsumes in His Fear all fears to which human birth is heir: fear of failure; fear of displeasing one's superiors; fear of the high and mighty; fear of loss of property, power, pelf, prestige, position; fear of dearth and disease: above all, fear of death.

Afterword

Since this study was launched with the Architecture of Guru Nanak's Japuji, it is only logical to wind it up with the same metaphor. As already enunciated, the four principal elements of Architecture are: Space, Structure, Form, and Time. Space is represented by the entire cosmos. Structure is *Dharma*, the unremitting Cosmic Moral Law. Form is all creation that peoples the Cosmic Void—whose most pulsating evidence is embodied in the teeming millions. Time is the caretaker-manager of this most majestic Architecture of Generation-Operation-Destruction (G-O-D), regulated and renewed by a helix (i.e., linearity fused into cyclicity) of ceaseless change. Time has full autonomy in the stated sense—but a dominion status next only to *Ik Oankar's* Absolute Authority. Thus, God's Transcendence [inscrutable Unknowability] and Immanence [experience of Divinity by Grace] are brought together in the selfsame Architecture: with Transcendence as its intangible aspect, and Immanence as its tangible dimension.

Man, as the crowning glory of Creation, has been blessed with the amazing capacity to "create artificial environments from the wildness and manage them in such a way that they long remain ecologically stable, economically profitable, aesthetically rewarding, an suited to his physical and mental health" [Rene Dubos, quoted by Vishwamittar in his paper: "Ecological Pastoralism, Urban Mysticism and Human Habitat", Roorkee University—December 1998].

Isn't that remarkable endorsement of God-like powers beset only by the spacio-temporal imperatives of change?

Man, as the Microcosm, has been *architectured* in the same way as the Macrocosm—with the three basic elements of Space, Structure, and Form. Space is his Soul. Structure is his Mind. Form is his Body. By this analogy, *Japu* (or *Simran*) is an exercise aimed at the integration of the Temporal Architecture of Microcosm [soul, mind. body] vis-àvis that of the Macrocosm [space, structure, form] so that the seeker may invoke, by the Guru's guidance, the vision of, and acquaintance with, the Monarch-Architect who, as the Master of His Own Will, dwells beyond the vicissitudes of change: The Directive Principle of the Dynamics of Time-Space Continuum.



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ART, ANCESTRY, KNOWLEDGE, AND RENUNCIATION

Art, Ancestry, Knowledge, and Renunciation
Are the morbid seeds from which do grow
Giants of Egotism whose life's only mission
Is to belittle others, and their own horn blow
There are millions of fruits here but each one
Has only one seed from which it sprouts and grows
But seeds of Ego are many, if unworthy of mention
Their fruits make even Poetry worse than prose
Ego is Body-Consciousness focusing on objects
In utter desperation to make them all compatible
To have creature comforts the Body never rejects
Till it becomes weak, and the Mind invulnerable
Inner Life is denying the pleasures of the flesh
To mull the Word away from Life's mad rush

ART IS AL L THAT MAN CREATES BUT NATURE NEVER CAN

Art is all that Man creates but Nature never can It's an exclusive endowment of the human being Working simultaneously both in action and plan It needs an acute ability of hearing and seeing It consists of two parts: Creativity and Craft Creativity is Sensibility, and Craft is Skill The final product is always preceded by a draft A lasting work develops from Intuition, *not* Will Its fountainhead surely lies in inspiration To Craft is assigned the mundane act of making What Sensibility can conceive only in imagination

Art can never be created by any nervous raking Preceding Great Art must be Aesthetic Appreciation Which, developed by Skill, becomes Artistic Creation

CONSCIOUSNESS PRESUPPOSES THAT MAN HAS A FREE WILL

Consciousness presupposes that Man has a Free Will He can use it to tread the path that he most likes He can eat "veg" or "non-veg", and remain human still Provided he controls anger and its deadly spikes Clash of "veg" and "non-veg" isn't in the Animal Kingdom The lion eats flesh, but the cow's staple diet is grass Such clash humans can prevent by the use of wisdom If they stop asking questions that are stupid or crass Even milk is *liquid* flesh is a fact Science has shown Breast-feeding involves putting flesh into the mouth Lion's denture is different from a cow's should be known But the human denture enjoys the capability of both A "vegetarian" sucking human blood is a *carnivore* A "meat-eater" serving humans is *blessed* evermore

MYSTICISM HAS BEEN CALLED THE ELITE'S RELIGION

Mysticism has been called the Elite's Religion Or a sweetmeat that has fallen to a dumb's lot Who knows but cannot tell what he's eaten So the joy remains an untold story sans a plot Mysticism is an experience hard to describe Even though the Mystic enjoys its heady trance Oblivious of community, and clan, and tribe And acquires in his lifestyle a curious stance M-Y-S-T-I-C-I-S-M, to me, is deep Meditation On Yin-yang principle in which the mind Sees Truth in Its powers of Creation and Invention In Splendorous Majesty carrying God's decrees Mysticism is the habit of religious thought 'n' feeling Of those seeking direct communion with God in appealing

SCIENCE IS AN INSTRUMENT OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE

Science is an instrument of empirical knowledge It investigates phenomena, discovers laws, invents It's taught through labs at school, university, college Observes functions, structures, colours, and scents It has instruments of observation and of measurement They automatically set a limit to its nature 'n' scope Science has, through the centuries, almost bent Every known object to serve Man, thus raising hope Of a better world, abounding in creature comforts But it has created new problems in the bargain That includes neurotics, diabetics, and perverts In other words, Science is both a boon and a bane Science's yield is universal: it suits the cravings of Man But Self-Realisation is private, and affects not his clan

THE SUBTLE ART OF PAINTING WORD-PICTURES IS POETRY

The subtle Art of painting Word-Pictures is Poetry It equips the Poet adequately to have a brush With the mystical World of Music, quietly To enjoy within the Mind a lusty Euterpean crush Poetry tops the list of sixty-four Fine Arts Followed by Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture To appreciate it, one has to be a man of many parts Enthusiastically embarked on the human adventure In every Religion, Poetry is the Language of Prophecy The chosen ones are sent by God with poetic messages To wean humans from illusion to the core of reality

To empower them to face Life's awesome ravages Poetry is born only when Music is injected into Prose Then, from the Spring of Inspiration, Prophecy flows

TRUTH LIVES, AND MUST BE THRO' LIVING KNOWN

The beauty of Truth is that it is a living thing: Always free, evergreen, like a perennial stream, Beyond Scriptural Word, above scientific reasoning Outside the reach of anyone's wildest dream. In vain have different men tried to dogmatise it In vain have they tried to preach it to the lay In vain are they trying now to pragmatise it In vain because, in so doing, the flame dies away Like a stream, Truth must its own course find Like a stream, Truth must its freshness impart Like a stream, Truth must its own business mind: Don't run away from Truth, O man, have a heart! Truth lives, and must be thro' living known: And living is being in mid-stream, all alone.

WALKING IN GOD'S WILL IS A NEVER-ENDING MARATHON

Walking in God's Will is a never-ending marathon Countless lives have vanished in its deadly pursuit Birth aft birth the Soul had run the race which is still on Though it is dead tired, much agonised, but yet mute This marathon is different from a long-distance race Which one may win with one's sustained endeavour The Soul's race can't be won except by God's grace

Such as may be granted suddenly now, or never Spiritual race requires the stamina of Humility And a progressive detachment from one's own Body

A Truth-cleansed heart as a receptacle of Divinity Its speed is subtler than the breath but never shoddy God is the Master of His Will, and He alone knows When to lift a suffering Soul from out of Life's throes

WILL, AND LOGIC, AND LANGUAGE SPRING

Will, and Logic, and Language spring From left hemisphere of the Brain These faculties to the world do bring Poetry and Fiction without refrain Empathy, Feelings, and Art are born In the human Brain's right hemisphere Where Intuition lets nothing to be torn And synthesis keeps Mind in right gear Right Brain is Holistic; the Left Sequential The former creates, and the latter criticises But yet the product of each seems natural From which fact someone like me surmises That the Right is East; and the Left is West

YOUR EGO CASTS A SPELL ON THE MIND SO DEEP

Your Ego casts a spell on the Mind so deep That arrogance soon becomes your second nature Forgetting: "As you sow so shall you reap" You invest lavishly in your bloated stature You think you are clever, though actually a fool Blinded by arrogance you commit misdeeds Ignoring the principles, and subverting each rule

Trying to feed your Ego with what it needs Even with an injured Ego you don't seem to think That the cause of the injury lies largely with you You catch at a straw when you begin to sink You abandon everything save a silly self-view Egotism is a disease that none can remedy How could anyone? It's a *self-caused* tragedy

GOD-REMEMBRANCE MUST STEADILY TURN INTO A CHANT

God-remembrance must steadily turn into a Chant And show its effect in manifest Humility Until the Mind is besieged by a renunciatory haunt To impel the Soul to pray for thanksgiving of Divinity The fifth stage is the realm of ever-growing Bliss Where soul-Consciousness loves to dwell for ever An imperturbable acquiescence beyond that and this A gift of God's Grace, not of Man's spiritual endeavour These five stages begin in the Cosmic Moral Law To Receive Knowledge to direct Spiritual endeavour Then God's Grace uplifts the Soul aft a Giant Thaw To move it up into Truth's innermost bower Such a miracle happens but in a rare of rarest cases Those so blessed ferry others across, with glowing faces

A YOGI ACQUIRES A DISCIPLINE WITH WHICH TO JOIN

A *yogi* acquires a discipline with which to join Consciousness with the Word to attain ecstasy Ruffled, it's hard to pay him back in his own coin For, sheathed in subtle body, he's immune to injury A *Bhogi* is a consumer inclined to over-indulgence Rather than join it with *shabda*, his *surta* he'd scatter The more he indulges in senses the more he breaks Drugged by misery, to him nothing seems to matter From the deep sleep of Ignorance he seldom awakes Between these extremes lies the Householder's life

Where Yoga and Bhogi close in to a neutral state

Precariously balanced on many a daily strife

In the circus of pain 'n' pleasure, love and hate There is no escape from this world of two colours Till on *surta-shabda Sadhna* His grace God showers Review of Dr SS Bhatti' Book "GURU NANAK BANI -Revelation, Mysticism, Creativity"

By

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GURU NANAK'S REVELATION IN ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Based on the Thesis for his second PhD, the book under review has been written by eminent Architect Dr. S.S. Bhatti. Deeply steeped as he is in Guru Nanak's teachings through the parental guidance and inspiration right from his childhood, the author has produced a work that bears a decidedly unique Sikh mystical tone and content. It is an attractive, accessible book that reflects not only the great learning of its author, but also his personal experience of Sikh life of action and its mystical longings and strivings. Giving cogent reasons for his preference, Bhatti dares to cross disciplinary, generic, and denominational boundaries in order to project his concept of "Creative Mysticism" in preference to the traditional notions of religion.

Written in the context of an altogether new perspective of Architecture, not attempted by any one else so far, Bhatti fully utilizes his expertise as an Architect and joins his forceful utterance to the voice of those of a very limited number of Sikh scholars who have written on Sikh mysticism. He deplores the neglect of mystical/ spiritual theology. This book sends out a strong message for recovering these lost branches of theological study, which enable us to focus on the questions intrinsic to theology, namely, the nature of God's reality and our human capacity to know God.

The work on the whole is impressive, and its style simple, dignified, and forceful while the language is clear, and the reasoning, in the main, logical. Bhatti draws upon the Sikh Scripture freely and buttresses his position with relevant quotes from *Guru Nanak Bani*. This is a magnificent book—painstakingly researched and gracefully written. It offers a perceptive study of Guru Nanak Bani with particular reference to his mystical theology.

It establishes clearly that Guru Nanak Bani is God's Revealed Word and shows that his Bani is none of these things: Mythology [Purest creation of the human imagination as TS Eliot had most aptly defined it], Metaphysics [branch of Philosophy that is purported to think things out to their ultimate significance], the Muse [Poetry which is the product of imperatives of prosody and literary rules enunciated by others], nor Science that has for its method hypotheses, theories, instrumentation, and lab models and experiments, not even Mysticism of the known variety which, as religion of the élite, has no use for the common man.

Guru Nanak's Revelation, being a verbal direct Revelation, implies that the Guru is not using any of his own faculties in conjuring up the make-believe world of Mythology or indulging in ratiocinative cerebration of Science or imagining romanticism as one comes across in Poetry ... he is quite simply describing what the Primal Person has Himself shown him.

In his concept of Creative Mysticism, Bhatti treats Mysticism as *Experience*, and Creativity as its *Expression*. According to him, Mysticism, at its profoundest, is *creative*, and Creativity, at its highest, is *mystical*. Since the two come simultaneously from *The Source* by the same means, *Revelation*, they are the most authentic portrayal of Truth, as the Chief Attribute of God, and thus communicable even to the common man as an expression of love that is God's unique unlettered language—scripted by the heart to become universal-timeless means of communication and communion among all peoples of the world.

The author has succeeded in showing the unique significance of Guru Nanak Bani in the context of World Religions by carefully selecting the most representative tenet in each case without resorting to paraphrasing to avoid distortion. Dr Bhatti, who holds three PhDs, including one on Sri Harmandar Sahib (worldwide known as Golden Temple), Amritsar, has, indeed, revealed Japuji to be the 'Architecture of the Soul'. For this reason, coming unexpectedly as it does from an architect his work is certainly a work of inspiration rather than mere scholarship. His home had the right ambience in which such a divine influence would directly and immediately be exerted upon his mind. His grandfather read Sukhmani Sahib all his life, and his self-taught versatile father Sardar Balwant Singh, with unshakable faith in Guru Nanak Dev's Shabda, designed two of Sikh Faith's historic monuments: Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Hassan Abdal (now in Pakistan), and Takht Sri Keshgarh, Anandpur Sahib. Above all, he successfully put his son Dr Bhatti on the God-lit Path of Gurbani on which his mortal journey has gained stronger and stronger foothold with every passing day.

Dr Bhatti's book may rank as among the best defences of *Creative Mysticism* brought forth by the Sikh Faith. It successfully achieves the objectives which the author had set forth in his novel study.

This volume is an excellent addition to the scant literature on Sikh Mysticism, covering as it does a wide range of social dimensions of Sikhism, besides providing innovative framework and insights for several important areas for further research.

Contents of the Book: To meet the requirements of the title of the book: "GURU NANAK'S BANI: Revelation, Mysticism and Creativity" the book comprises eight chapters titled: An Architect's Approach to Religion; An Architect's Approach to Creative Mysticism; Revelation; Architecture of the Japuji; Mental Constructs of Guru Nanak's Bani; Guru Nanak's Revelation; Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism; and Assessment.

Chapter I: Bhatti perceives Religion from the perspective of Architecture as "an *Edifice of Faith*, upraised of the same elements—Space,

Structure, Form and Time as Architecture does, requiring human beings to live "exuberantly" instead of treating Religion as "lack-lustre obligation". He attempts to show that Guru Nanak Bani, with focus on *Japuji* is none of these—Mythology, Metaphysics and Poetry.

Chapter II: Giving brief description of mysticism and of creativity, Bhatti asserts that their mutually integrated product that he names as *Creative Mysticism* is difficult to hold. "Guru Nanak Bani is a paragon of Creative Mysticism, exhorting as it does the common man to a life of *Sachiar*, as pragmatic spirituality, during workaday existence." Describing various levels at which life functions, the author emphasises that the mind works at its full capacity in the realm of Creative Mysticism. The imperatives and criteria of Creative Mysticism are fully described. Summing up, Bhatti opines that "In Guru Nanak's Bani, Revelation makes his Mysticism a Timeless Experience and his Creativity a Universal Expression for communicating Lord's Word (*Shabda*) for the general weal of all humankind."

Chapter III: The concept of Revelation as prevalent in different religious traditions is described. The objective is to provide "the necessary matrix in which to see the distinctive features of the Guru's Revelation" and to evaluate the nature and scope of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism. It is the nature of Guru Nanak's Revelation that distinguishes his Bani from all forms of Poetry, as a literary art. There is something which sets *his* Revelation apart from other forms of Revelation known to students of Religion.

Chapter IV deals with the Architecture of *Japuji*, its design, structure and form: Elements of Architecture which manifest the objectives, stages, and means for the transformation of human beings, and are thus building blocks of Creative Mysticism.

Chapter V deals with the Mental Constructs for Guru Nanak's Bani: (i) Mysticism, its nature and significance, basic patterns, mystical relationships, symbolism of love and marriage, psychological aspects, problems of communications, and understanding; and (ii) Creativity: its characteristics, functions, elements, principles, objectives, and strategies.

Chapter VI deals with Guru Nanak's Revelation. The task of the book is to explain the nature of the unique Revelation which

is contained in Guru Nanak Bani. It asserts that "Guru Nanak's Revelation is mystically-creative and creatively-mystical insofar as it exhorts man as a privileged human person [possessor of *dur-labh deh*, his hard-earned "mortal frame"] to take initiative and aspire for an inner life through God-orientation (*gurmukh*) by transcending Mind-orientation (*manmukh*). The term 'orientation' used by the author is typically *architectural*.

Chapter VII: Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism: An Architect's Perspective: Dr Bhatti's perspective is delineated in very precise and crisp terms: "Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism lays foundation for a non-denominational, non-communal, non-sectarian, non-ethnic system of Holistic Humanism (the phrase coined by the author) whereby anyone and everyone is urged to an optimistic View and a fulfilling Way of Life" emphasising the essential requirements of being a true Sikh in accordance with the Guru's teachings. Bhatti lists 26 Principles/Axioms/ Aphorisms as these flow effortlessly from the Creative Mysticism of Guru Nanak.

Chapter VIII: Assessment: Critical Evaluation of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism emphasises that "the main aim of *Japu* is the integration of Body, Mind, and Soul into an organic whole..." leading to the stage of *Sahj.* The seeker then becomes "a willing and an effective instrument of Lord's *Hukm*—Edict-Fiat". This involves total self-surrender. The effectiveness of such Creative Mysticism is the achievement of a "divinised state of being unchangeably optimistic, uncompromisingly life-affirming, and incomparably simple". It leads to the fusion of the human faculties of Reason, Emotion, and Imagination into Intuition.

Architect's interpretation of Gurbani line: "Jo Brahmanday, soi Pindey" in Architectural terms: "Man, as microcosm, has been architectured in the same way as the macrocosm—with the three basic elements of Space, Structure, and Form. Space is his Soul, Structure is his Mind, and Form is his Body. By analogy, Japu (or Simran) is an exercise aimed at integration of the Temporal Architecture of Microcosm (soul, mind, body) vis-à-vis that of the Macrocosm (space, structure, form) …"

The question of Revelation is a formidable one in the proper sense of the word, not only because it may be seen as the first and last question

for faith. Bhatti, therefore, attempts to present a full sweep of the idea of Revelation and devotes a full chapter on the subject followed by another comprehensive Chapter discussing the concept of Revelation in different religious traditions and focusing on the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's Revelation.

Quoting Guru Nanak's Bani, he fully justifies his assertions:

- 1. "Guru Nanak's Revelation is mystically-creative and creativelymystical insofar as it exhorts man as a privileged human person [possessor of *dur-labh deh*, his hard-earned "mortal frame"] to take initiative and aspire for an inner life through God-orientation (*gurmukh*) by transcending Mind-orientation (*manmukh*).
- 2. Guru Nanak's Revelation makes a radical departure from the teachings of other religions.
- 3. Guru Nanak's Revelation "differs from all known forms of revelation in several other respects: the depth of its mystical insight, the palpableness of its creative vitality, the universalness of its vision, the comprehensivity of its approach to the problems of workaday existence, the holism of its progressional spirituality—above all, its impassioned concern of being actively engaged in the amelioration of the human condition."

A major shift in the Sikh concept of Revelation has been from revelation as a set of divinely imparted propositions to revelation as a set of events—the recurrent phases of mystical experience.

Discussing the relationship between Revelation and Reason, Bhatti seeks to recover a concept of revelation and a concept of reason that can at least enter into a living dialectic and together engender a fresh understanding of faith. The literary form and the profound moral tone of the work are sustained throughout.

Bhatti's is a pioneering work based on real insight into the mystical phenomenon of the Sikh Gurus, especially the unique and distinctive aspects of Revelation received by them—verbal *direct* revelation as against non-verbal or revelation through an agent. His development of the concept of "Creative Mysticism" in *Sikhi* context is a very comprehensive thesis as compared to elementary treatment elsewhere in the literature on Mysticism especially by the Sikh scholars. I got almost overawed when I tried to do an analytical study of his book. Every repeat reading of the book opened up every time a new dimension of the mystical phenomenon. I needed several readings of the book to grasp the real essence of it so as to do full justice to it, but, in all honesty, I feel that I have not yet completely achieved my goal.

I am pained to find that Dr Bhatti's book has not been reviewed by any eminent scholar (according to Internet reports). I wish someone does so, if only persuaded by my write-up, because I strongly feel that such a study of this unusual tome would be very beneficial for many others just as it has been in my own case, deepening my understanding of Sikh Mysticism vis-à-vis Sikh Creativity—aspects which have not been dealt with by others.

The 240-page book is moderately priced at Rs 500 to be within the reach of every reader. Besides its low cost, the contents of this tome should attract readership ranging from those interested in Mysticism and those who have anything to do with Creativity, for in no single book the latter subject has been discussed so elaborately with a penetrating insight into its why's and wherefore's. What is more is that Dr Bhatti himself being well versed in the Theory, Practice, Research, and Pedagogy, with their hitherto unknown bearing on the four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology, brings to the subject a refreshing vitality that could inspire the reader to explore and develop his own creativity as a priceless gift of God in His ambient mysticism.

In my considered opinion, this book should embellish all libraries to be studied as a harbinger of an offbeat scholarship and a novel, holistic-humanist approach to its creative extension into the world of faith as it may shape the world's tomorrow.

—**Pritam Singh Kohli**, I.A.S (Retd.) President: Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh e-mail: pritam_kohli@yahoo.com

HAIL! MONARCH OF LOVE-FILLED HEARTS AN ODE TO GURU NANAK DEV

When they of the West were content with their Renaissance You ushered in an Era of Enlightenment Through offbeat odysseys into the realm of mind When they discovered that the earth was not The centre of the cosmos as hitherto known You made known your vision that there were countless worlds Where even "the sky was not the limit" to anything While America was Columbus' geographical find You discovered many an unknown world In the infinite cosmos within and without When there was extinction of excellence In literary culture and public virtue You lighted the lamp of universal love. When invaders paraded sans qualms of conscience The self-destroying aspect of an unbridled egotism You displayed the infinite power Of humility, politeness, and simplicity By the overwhelming eloquence of your own example You shook up the masses from the age-old Slumber Of their deep-rooted forgetfulness of God You exposed the hollowness of ceremonial Pietv Rites and rituals in "religious" life And prescribed the panacea for all human ills In the common man's language-the Tenets of **Timeless** Faith "Earn thy living by the sweat of thy brow And with others thine earning share Always meditating on the Divine Name" By travelling through the dark wilderness of Uncharted regions You wended your way into the minds of one And all Beyond caste, creed, colour, and race As the Monarch of Love-filled Hearts

Where esoteric erudition was a spent force

Lying exhausted on the wasteland of speculative Philosophy You paved the way for a New World Order With your pragmatic spirituality for everyday 1150 By delinking workaday existence from the Menace of Mythology, superstitions, cults, and customs You put it in touch with the process of history And also taught how to transcend it in daily life Through reverent love of all that exists By the power of your deeply inspired hymnody Anyone can now clasp the stars of heaven in one hand And hold the sap of life on earth in the other Salutations to You, O Apostle of Love Forever are we deeply indebted to You For revealing to us one simple fact That Truth comes within the reach of experience Only when purity of conduct is nurtured by Unconditioned spontaneity of an innocent heart That beats in tune with the Will of God The Holy Name signifies His manifest totality Immanent in both the created world And within the inmost being of the human soul Hail, Guru, Waheguru, Waheguru!

NOTE: I had written this poem as versified exegesis of Guru Nanak Dev's Triune Psycho-Social Formula: *Kirat Karo* [Earn thy livelihood by the sweat of thy brow]; *Vand Chhako* [Share your honest earnings with the under-privileged]; and *Naam Japo* [Meditate on the Holy Name] for everyone's everyday use to lead a wholesome life of Pragmatic Spirituality in the pursuit of Holistic Humanism on Planet Earth as unceasing celebration of divine dispensation of Lord God, the Common Father of all peoples inhabiting the globe, in an aura of the Brotherhood of Man.



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CREATIVE MYSTICISM - *Guru Nanak's Pragmatic Spirituality* is a pioneering research of Guru Nanak Bani with focus on his *magnum opus* Japuji. It goes far beyond and deeper than a scholastic enquiry into the nature and scope of Theology as the study of Religion which is part philosophy, part history, part anthropology, and also something entirely its own. Studying Theology means taking on challenging questions about the meaning, significance, and influence of Religion. Theologians have the complex job of thinking about and debating the nature of God. However, this book investigates the why and how of an architect's way and view of the same things in the world that is so very different from all those professionals who pursue only one calling and/or have their perceptions conditioned by the regimen of their chosen specialisations.

Architecture, as the Great Mother Art, is the crucible of an unending Creativity from which human civilisations have emerged, and continue to do so, one after the other in refreshing new forms throughout the chequered course of history. The author has used his versatile expertise and rich experience in the four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology, he does it with characteristic resilience of spirit that is nurtured by his ongoing inter-disciplinary approach to problems of Creativity in different media—something which no other single discipline known to humankind ever does with the same conviction, authenticity, and effectiveness.

Dr Bhatti's book is a pioneering work based on real insight into the mystical phenomenon of the Sikh Gurus, especially the unique and distinctive aspects of Revelation received by them—verbal *direct* revelation as against non-verbal or revelation through an agent. The author's development of the concept of "Creative Mysticism" in *Sikhi* context is a very comprehensive thesis as compared to elementary treatment elsewhere in the literature on Mysticism especially by the Sikh scholars. I got almost overawed when I tried to do an analytical study of his book. Every repeat reading of the book opened up every time a new dimension of the mystical phenomenon.

-Pritam Singh, President, Institute of Sikh Studies [IOSS], Chandigarh

This book is a fine piece of research on the study of human experience revealed through poetry and architecture, a rare combination. No doubt the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, is very proud of this product, but those for whom it is produced would surely feel indebted to Dr Bhatti for exploring the depth of aesthetics in art and culture. I feel extremely proud in presenting this volume to the community of academicians, awakened souls, and readers in general. At the same time, I pray for many more such valuable gifts from Dr Bhatti's pen. I wish this book to be part of every library in home or institution. It will add to the existing set of knowledge.

-Dr Darshan Singh, Chairman, Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

This doctoral dissertation was published in 2007 by Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, under the title *GURU NANAK'S BANI – Revelation, Mysticism, and Creativity.* However, after the untimely demise of its proprietor Sardar Manjit Singh the book became unavailable. The author, therefore, decided to publish it again under the new title *CREATIVE MTSTICISM - Guru Nanak Dev's Pragmatic Spirituality*, with important additions of essays as well as poetry that deal with several crucial subjects and are intended to equip the reader intellectually to look at the esoteric contents in a new way. It is to be hoped that those inclined to understand the profounder aspects of Religion would benefit from reading the book.

According to the author, "This work is a fresh look at the Revelation [Ilhaam], as largely embodied in Guru Nanak's Japuji. It sets forth how an architect-with training, expertise, and experience in the art of visualisation (coupled with on-ground actualisation)-views such an esoteric subject as Religion. My first job, therefore, was to drastically cut down in the text the deployment of the term "Religion" which, owing to its misuse and abuse over the centuries, evokes revulsion (rather than reverence) in the minds of those who profess to have their database in the so-called scientific learning. But more than a mere replacement for "Religion", I have coined the term "Creative Mysticism" as a framework for the study of Guru Nanak's Bani. It is intended to encompass, among other things, the chief function of Religion as a transmuting force for orienting (even by de-orienting and/ or re-orienting) the seeker's mind to the Indivisible (if Ineffable) Unicity of Godhead so that all his mundane activities become divinised-and (self-exalted) to sublimity during workaday existence." He goes on to add in his characteristic creative optimism this buoyant note: "The success of this ecclesiastic enterprise undertaken by an architect would be consummated in some devotee getting sufficiently motivated to read Guru Nanak's Japuji in the original with a heightened zeal in the light of this offbeat exegesis."



- Dr S(urindera) S(ingh) Bhatti is India's most versatile professional, nicknamed "Chandigarh's Mr Versatility" by *Chandigarh Newsline* of *The Indian Express*. He pursues an amazing range of 55 disciplines that include Architecture; Art; Poetry; Criticism; Aesthetics; Engineering; Vocal Music; Comparative Religion.
- He was born in Amritsar on 24 June 1938. Founder-Teacher, and Former Principal, Chandigarh College of Architecture [Established on 07 August 1961 at Le Corbusier's behest as the Academic Wing of the Great Chandigarh Experiment in Modern Urbanism]. He uses "*T'ameer Chandigarhi*" as *Takhallus* [pen-name] for Urdu poetry.
- He holds the degrees of B. Arch. [Bombay University]; M. Arch. on Rock Garden [The University of Queensland, Australia]; and three doctorates: PhD on Chandigarh; PhD on Guru Nanak Dev's *Japuji*; and PhD on Golden Temple, Amritsar, all from Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- Dr Bhatti belongs to a family of architects, artists, artisans, craftsmen, wood-carvers, and builders engaged in construction, art, and architecture since the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. His father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti designed *Gurdwara Panja Sahib*, Hassan Abdal [now in Pakistan], and *Takht Sri Kesgarh Anandpur Sahib* in Punjab.
- Motivated by his credo and practical knowledge in Creative Versatility he founded in October 1999 the FIRST FRIDAY FORUM to disseminate experience-based knowledge through

Monthly Interactive Programmes organised [240 until December 2019] involving professionals from different fields and the public. Annual Oration on a select theme along with Awards-Giving Function for honouring professionals from diverse fields for their outstanding contribution to the aesthetic enhancement of the Built-Environment have been regularly held in October since 2006.

- He founded FIRST FRIDAY FORUM in 1999 as noted above, and co-founded with late Sardar Manjit Singh the Institute of Indian Interior Designers in 1972, and became founder editor of its journal *Interior Design*.
- Author of 31 books on art, architecture, theology, poetry, criticism, etc: The Mystic Rosary of Dr Diwana; CHANDIGARH-2020 [Edited Proceedings of National Seminar organised by Chandigarh Administration]; Psychic Shadows [English Poetry]; Pyam-i-Dard-i-Bedarmaan [Urdu Poetry]; CONTEMPORARY URDU POETRY Contribution of Poets of Punjab; JOURNEY OF THE STRAIGHT LINE
 An Exposition of Sahni's Drawings & Creativity; GURU NANAK'S BANI Revelation, Mysticism, Creativity; Nek Chand's Enchanted Kingdom: ROCK GARDEN IN CHANDIGARH A Critical Evaluation of the Work of Nek Chand; CHANDIGARH: An Irony of History; GOLDEN TEMPLE A Marvel of Sikh Architecture, etc.
- He has penned 1,000 poems in English and 4,000 in Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi in various genres and poetic metres.
- He wrote over 4,000 letters to different persons ordinary and extraordinary – on diverse subjects in India and abroad. Some of the *Letters to the Editors* of various English newspapers written by him have been published in book-form under the title *IDEAS FOR ACTION*.
- Indian Pioneer/Researcher in Architectural Education; Architectural Journalism; Theory of Design; Art in Architecture; Rural Habitat; Low-Cost Design and Building Construction; Environment-Friendly Planning; Creativity in Urban Development; Holistic Education, etc.
- Former Senator, Panjab University, and Dean, Faculty of Design & Fine Arts [1984-1996]. The Faculty oversees the disciplines of

Art [painting, sculpture, graphics, and applied art], Architecture, Dance, Drama, Music, and History of Art.

- Winner of over 20 awards and honours, notably, the Indian Institute of Architects [IIA] Prof MB Achwal Life-Time Achievement Gold Medal in Architectural Education; Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects [JIIA] National Award for Excellence in Architecture [Research Category]. He was appointed National Art Adviser for India by the National Academy of Arts, Science, and Literature, Italy. Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi conferred on him *Best Book of the Year Award for 2019* for his anthology *Shu'oor-i-Bekhudi* in Urdu poetry category on 20 April 2019. The award carried a cash prize of Rs 25,000.00 and Commendation Certificate.
- He was awarded Two-Year Senior Research Fellowship by the Government of India for the study of the Historical Monuments of Sikh Architecture, which he later extended into doctoral research and eventually earned his third PhD on SRI HARMANDAR SAHIB: A Study of Architecture, Engineering, and Aesthetics from the Panjab University in 2008.
- He published over 700 Articles on diverse subjects such as Poetry [in English, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi]; Criticism [of Art, Architecture, Literature, Music]; and Reflective Essays on Aesthetics; Engineering; Environment; Sustainable Development; Music; Comparative Religion; Mysticism; Meditation; Creativity; Geography; Botany; Philosophy; Sociology; Mythology; Politics; Economics; Education; Policy for Urban Planning in India, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, etc. These were featured in newspapers, magazines, journals in India and abroad, notably, the Illustrated Weekly of India, Femina, Eve's Weekly, Design (magazine of arts and ideas), Interior Design (Journal of the Institute of Indian Interior Designers), Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects (JIIA), Amrita Bazaar Patrika, The Times of India, The Indian Express, The Tribune, The Hindustan Times, Roop-Lekha [Journal of the All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society (AIFACS)], ARTNEWS (Newsletter of AIFACS), Contemporary Art (Journal of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi), Art of Living [Established in 1970 by late Sardar Mubarak Singh who was Executive Member of

Amritsar Improvement Trust – The Art of Living Foundation was set up in 1981], The Integrationist, The Punjab Mail, and so on.

- Bhatti's articles by invitation have been published in Panjab University's *Social Sciences Research Journal*.
- He has reviewed several books on art, architecture, and poetry.
- As the official Art Critic of *The Tribune* for 20 years (1977-1997) he published over 400 reviews of international, national, regional, state, and district-level exhibitions, workshops, which included solo shows, group exhibitions, and various academies annual exhibitions. His writings over two decades created Movement of Art in northwestern India that eventually produced national and international celebrities.
- He was Editor of Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi's annual exhibition souvenir when he was its Vice-President, and Member of its Executive Board.
- He prepared a special 35-minute audio-visual (his commentary synchronised with 150 images) presentation of Nek Chand's Rock Garden, which was screened as part of the year-long exhibition titled "*Bhoulbhoulaiyan*" at *Musee d' Enfants*, Paris, in 1981, when such presentations in India were very rare.
- His research thesis "*The Rock Garden of Chandigarh: A Critical Evaluation of the Work of Nek Chand*" and several articles published in Australia, Italy, France, England, USA, etc have made this work of "Outsider Art" world-famous.
- Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi conferred on him the Award of Recognition for outstanding contribution to English Literature on 8 March 2020. The award carries a citation and a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000.00. This is the rarest of rare honour because it has been won by him in a field that is far removed from his profession of architecture.

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