

GURU NANAK DEV

— *Dispenser of Love and Light* —

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Dispenser of Love and Light

Foreword by Bhai (Dr) Harbans Lal of America

Dr SS Bhatti



www.whitefalconpublishing.com

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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

Piety



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 use
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 did this painting as visual version of the three basic tenets of the Sikh Faith founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 CE):

- (1) Earn thy livelihood by the sweat of thy brow;
- (2) Share your honest earnings with the under-privileged; and
- (3) Meditate on the Holy Name.

- This painting along with my poem on the Holy personage was published in *The Tribune*.





Dedicated
to

All earnest seekers of truth worldwide
from whose undiminished longing for the lord
continues to emanate the song of silence
hearing which those myriad who abide
as *Naam*-entranced souls singing as bard
attuning “music of the spheres” to his essence

SKYSCRAPER OF THE SOUL



I got this 3D image made on computer as graphic representation of my exegesis of Japji and called it 38-Storeyed *Skyscraper of the Soul*. I interpreted Guru Nanak Dev's *Gurbani* received by him in his Revelation to be the ascent of the Soul that it must make *Pauri* [Level] by *Pauri* to access the

Creator's Home. Its foundation was laid on four pillars: *Adi Sach*, *Jugadi Sach*, *Hai Bhi Sach*, *Nanak*, *Ho Si Bhi Sach*.

Beginning with the first level where the seeker learns and resolves to live according to the Edict-Fiat of God who is Master of His will—the *Guru* shows at each successive *Pauri* more and more entrancing Cosmic View of Life. When I showed it to the external examiner who had conducted the viva voce examination for my second PhD on “*CREATIVE MYSTICISM: A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japji*”, he exclaimed, “Oh, It looks so sacred!”

My research was honoured by Guru Har Krishan Educational Society, Chandigarh, as the Best Doctorate done in 2000 at the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University. As you can see the superstructure is lifted above ground on *pilotis* to suggest that though the Body subsists by necessity on the resources of Mother Earth yet detachment is a prerequisite for the Soul's Vertical Journey.

Each level is a geometrical figure whose sides equal the number of lines in a given *Pauri* though the height is the same in each case. The pinnacle is a conical shape suggesting that the Universe had sprung from a single point, *The Source*; in this case, the apex or vertex of the cone as a point that expands towards the base via the curved lateral surface 🌿



Dr (Bhai) Harbans Lal delivering a discourse in America



FOREWORD

BY HARBANS LAL, PH.D.; D. LIT (HONS)



To date, there are over a thousand books written on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak. To them will be added many more this year of 2019 as we are celebrating the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. Hopefully, many of these efforts will find resonance with people and scholars of other faiths and spiritual traditions.

Guru Nanak will never fail to inspire writers, historians, and the thinkers of a new age to pay their homage to the only man of his kind taking birth on this earth. All of them continue to be finding meaning in Guru Nanak irrespective of their own faith traditions, political or social views.

Professor Surindera Singh Bhatti is a master of writings and scholarly endeavors as any reader will discover in his current book being commented upon. He took it upon himself to pay homage to his guru in his own style, the

style of an architect that happened to be his profession. He builds on the field of religion, history, and art.

When Guru Nanak came to this world, paths to enlightenment were devoid of truth and completely distorted towards unholy goals. There were vigorous and countless mutually supportive interests that designed the right tricks to fool people. The tricks were hidden under the religious practices that were thrust on people by whatever means available. The clerics and high priests of every shade and kind were inventing myths, fictions, fables, and fairytales to answer real questions. And, they were cleverly protecting their myths by un-testable gory threats and/or sky-high promises.

That was the age when the Brahmins and the Mullahs invented deities, stories, idols, recitation, and rituals that supported each other. They asked



their followers to erect beautiful buildings to house God and they promised them accessibility to Gods at the precise time and places through the donation of a lot of wealth, time with labor, and intellect. Further, the same clergy employed beauty shows that were attractive to innocent minds, special kind of altruism that only benefited the clergy, and similar other tricks that speeded up the agenda of the clergy and the ruler bosses.

There are a plethora of records of Guru Nanak's times where miracles were used to convert human behaviors to the benefit of the clergy and the rulers. They built cults of external marks and wrappings to encourage murders and wars against other religions. They asked to invest a massive amount of time, energy and money in ritualistic illusions and beliefs such as, converting others or serving clergy would mean heavens no one has ever seen. Further, they made use of fear among the masses to ensure compliance.

Guru Nanak came out of his meditation at the banks of Veni [also spelled 'Bein'] River. That river passed through the town of Sultanpur, the town of Nanak's employment. Guru Nanak exhibited fervent zeal to spread what he said was inspiration from Almighty.

Nanak then left on long journeys to meet with the religious leaders and places that people considered sacred. He used these visits to lay the foundation of a new model and tradition of

holding interfaith dialogues, a mode of confrontation not known before in the history of religions. He felt that the interfaith dialogues would promise understandings among the children of the same Creator. Through interfaith dialogues, Guru Nanak taught that human life is a result of the millions of years' history and experience at the end of numerous life cycles of birth and death. This history manifests in the human mind and body as primitive and corrupted instincts all inherited from plant and animal life. Upon birth, they are reinforced by illusions created by self-serving materialistic cultures and clergy promoting ethnic religions.

Thus, human life endures pains and sufferings, but at the same time experiences longing for salvation. Suffering comes from the enslavement of five elements that acquire the strength of evils for indiscriminating humans. Conquering over these evils with the sword of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment would lead to freedom from suffering, and further to the achievement of the timeless bliss.

Guru Nanak continued to teach that there was no specific religion that God would patronize. Each disciple of spirituality may seek guidance from the Guru, the enlightenment of the spirit. Every seeker of truth works out his/her own practices to calm down the mind and find suitable paths of salvation. Guru Nanak

preached the institution of practices leading to an experience of divinity in life (NAAM), sharing the possessions and seeking the divinity (DAAN), and inculcation of deeds that cleanse the body and the mind (ISNAAN).

Guru Nanak stressed that the company of enlightened ones will facilitate the journey to salvation. He asked to incorporate spiritual doctrines into moral and ethical norms of everyday life. No deities, no mythical stories, no hidden powers, nor other beauty tricks of organized religions would be needed.

Those who followed the Guru were recognized as the Seekers or the Sikhs, if coming from Hindu traditions, or they were called Mureeds if coming from Abrahamic traditions. There were abundant from both traditions at the end at Kartarpur, the Divine Village that Guru Nanak founded.

The book being FOREWORD-ed is written by SS Bhatti, a master of writing and a scholarly expert, with a novel approach to the study and understanding of life and its innumerable expressions across the globe. In the following book, the author has illustrated many facets of his expertise in the field of religion, history, and art. He renders Guru Nanak's *Jap* stanzas in his own poetry; he covers several dimensions of divinity; he writes a section on the vocabulary employed in the hymns of Guru Nanak. He

describes Guru Nanak as a dispenser of love and light. He covers even the paintings of Guru Nanak, the paintings were done by the devotees, years after Guru Nanak left for the heavenly abode. Bhatti has added one art-work done by him that expresses in apt visual metaphors the divine exhortation of Guru Nanak: "*Naam, Daan, Isnaan*", and is supported by a poem published long ago in *The Tribune*, a leading English newspaper of north-western India. All this makes the scope of the book very vast, holistic and refreshing.

For me, it was certainly an intimidating task because of the extensive and awesome coverage of Guru Nanak and his teachings in the forthcoming book. I had the opportunity in the last few years to comment on several books on the same subject as this is the year of Guru Nanak's 550 birth event. In this case, I have known the author from his extensive writings and acts of public service. He comes from the family which provided leaders in the field of services to the Sikh community, such as his father designing Panja Sahib Gurdwara, Takht Sri Kesgarh, Anandpur Sahib, and many such other ventures.

The author himself imagined the *Jap* project as a tower almost touching the sky—and revealing its architectural form has named it "Skyscraper of the Soul". As a teacher of Architecture—the discipline that he considers truly holistic



encompassing as it does vital inputs from all fields of human endeavor, notably, the Humanities, Art, Science, Engineering, Technology, Environment, etc. The author takes pride in learning and teaching that to get to the truth of design of diverse building-types one must go back to the beginning because everything is purest at the source. For example, he avers that the Ganges is irremediably polluted but Gangotri always basks in its pristine glory by virtue of its uncontaminated purity. Thus the author takes pride in applying the same time-tested formula in the writing of this book. In this case, however, the beginning goes back to billions of years when the “Big Bang of

God’s Creative Mysticism” [to use his own highly expressive coinage] had occurred, and the universe was born. To him, this eventful Genesis of the Universe Guru Nanak Dev has captured with unmatched divine brilliance in his *Shabad* [hymn] *Arbad narbad dhundhukaara...* given in the book in poetic rendering.

The readers of the book may be from many disciplines and interests besides the Sikhs and the Mureeds. However, I feel, they will find the author’s profound insights and holistic interpretations enriching as well as illuminating. To my reckoning, this book should find pride of place in all public and private libraries internationally 🌿





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NOTE: The quatrain printed in left column was composed by me in the Urdu language using the eight letters that constitute the name “Guru Nanak” as shown in its top first line. This is my humble attempt at capturing the quintessence of timeless-universal message conveyed to him by Lord God through Revelation [*Ilhaam*]. Misleading scholars who have dubbed the Guru’s divine proclamations as reshaping of Hindu and Islamic religious thoughts should read my book with due seriousness and without prejudice after taking a cue from this poem.



1



PREFACE

I was born at Amritsar which is regarded by the devout across the globe as the Holiest City of the Sikh Faith—the world’s youngest religion founded by Guru Nanak Dev [1469-1539 CE]. My grandfather Sardar Hira Singh Bhatti [1855-1945] and father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti [1905-1993] had deep reverence for the Guru’s spiritual exhortations and profitably used them for leading a contented life by pursuing their creative occupations with unremitting diligence. Granny had acquired just enough literacy to be able to recite *Sukhmani Sahib* as *Nit Nem* [religious routine]. This had given him certain ‘supernatural’ powers which he used for social service. Anxious mothers came with their little sons suffering from the evil eye and went away happy and grateful. Owners whose buffaloes and cows had run dry received granny’s *mantra* on a ball of kneaded flour which when

administered to the stricken cattle revived their health miraculously. He wanted to teach a strange *mantra* to my father which he declined. Using it, the initiated could know 40 days in advance the day of their death. My father said he would not buy anything that floored him with mortal fear of impending doom and thus frozen in dread be obliged to give up normal human activities so soon! However, to satisfy my curiosity, he told me that his father had revealed that the human body casts a shadow on the sky just as it does on earth, and when death nears the last 40 days of the foreordained life-span it disappears from the sky. However, it could be seen only by the trained person. It is no credulous romancing which this fact would assuredly corroborate. Granny often told my father, who was a single child born when his parents were in advanced middle age, that just as you are, your



son [that's me] is a single male child. However, he would have a younger brother but it is not my destiny to see him. My brother was born within two years of granny's demise! I was hardly seven when my grandfather died; otherwise, given my proclivities for the esoteric and the occult, I would have gladly learned much from him in the area of the supernatural.

My father having passed his matriculation examination as a private candidate was a pragmatist who, unlike his father, looked upon the Sacred Word in a diametrically opposed way. As Guru, it required unremitting spiritual endeavour for its consummation in mortal life on Planet Earth—something, much to the chagrin of my father, my granny hardly ever emphasised. His formula was simplistic: “*Aapei Wah-i-Guru devei ga*” [as care-taking Father it was God's job to ensure adequate provisions for us mortals!] Sticking to what I call “Pragmatic Spirituality” my father had developed unswerving faith in Divine Dispensation *via* Guru Nanak's constant guidance. Moreover, he had a unique way of testing God's graciousness. Around 80 years of age he had gone to the Punjab Treasury in Sector 17, Chandigarh, when he suffered a ‘massive heart attack’. He later told me that sensing the onslaught he suddenly recollected these lines from the Second Pauri of Ashtpadi-11 of Guru Arjan Dev's *Sukhmani Sahib: Prabh*

bhaavai binu saas tei raakhai/Prabh bhaavai taan har gun bhaakhai [If God wills He could without breath keep alive man/If he so wills every virtue becomes the beneficiary's own]. At that near-fatal moment he said, “I told the Guru that have I believed without questioning the truth of this proclamation. Now the onus is on you to take and pass the test”; then I fell down!” Soon a crowd of curious people gathered around him but nobody dared to do anything helpful fearing the old man's death would be attributed to the volunteering Spartan. Just then, from nowhere, a class-mate of my younger brother appeared on the scene. Recognising “this is our own Bapuji” he rushed him to Sector-16 General Hospital where he was admitted in the emergency ward and given adequate treatment. My brother reached the hospital much later when he telephoned me it was around five in the evening. On reaching there I found my father put on oxygen and glucose. The medical report that hung on the wall by his side said: “Massive heart attack”. However, as was his wont he quickly changed over into a joking mood. For example, when I told him that my younger brother could have taken leave and rushed to the place, he laughed and said, “Look, he is not a simpleton like you. As an intelligent and worldly-wise guy he had deferred the leave until a few days later for my cremation!”

My father's lifelong unsparing combat with family penury toughened his moral fibre so much that he became a titan who could fight the whole world—singlehanded. In the chequered course of his personal history and professional growth he acquired an amazing creative versatility: self-taught architect, painter, sculptor, wood-carver, adept in classical music, wrestler, political analyst, and much else; achieving a high level of accomplishment in whatever he was forced to choose. He became the first medical artist of the country when he joined Glancy Medical School, Amritsar, in 1940-41. His was perfect flawless planning that bordered on the prophetic—I am an architect as a result of his remarkable foresight and clear-cut action plan.

Despite their conflicting ideological and philosophical outlooks, both my granny and my father had undwindling fondness for visiting every evening the Golden Temple, the holiest of holy shrine of the Sikh Faith. This desire was so overwhelming that my grandfather had rented a shop near enough to go to *Sri Darbar Sahib* fast enough. However, it was my father of whose devoted routine I was a regular beneficiary as he would take me along on every visit to the Golden Temple. Commuting the distance on foot it was like what has come to be known as “Walk the Talk” from home to the Golden Temple and back. Seeing us always move together people had dubbed us as bosom friends.

My father's grit, determination, resoluteness, mental strength, and moral stamina can be gauged from this example. Some God-fearing suggested to him that if he recited Pauri-25 of *Japji Sahib* [*Bahuta karamu likkhiya na jaaye/ Vadda Daata til na tamaaye...*](It's impossible to record the infinite favours of the Great Benefactor/Yet he showers His grace continually without expecting anything in return...)] 54,000 times in 18 days his life would be blessed in every way. Without questioning his counsellor, he took up the uphill task stoically. Every morning at two o'clock, he would sit under *Dukkh Bhanjani Beri*, with direct view of *Sri Harmandar Sahib*, and get up on finishing 3,000 *patths* after 14 hours thereby completing the spiritual assignment in 18 days as prescribed. At Baba Bakala, the historic place where Makhan Shah Lubana had discovered *Guru Tegh Bahadar*, my father was a drawing teacher. Someone suggested that if he did 1,25,000 *patths* of *Mool Mantra* he would see Guru Nanak face to face.

As was his wont, my father embarked upon the holy mission like an obedient servant of God. He was in the habit of taking his siesta and told me that he was not sure when the stipulated count was reached but one fine afternoon in his sleep Guru Arjan Dev showed up. Accosting the Holy Personage, he said, “Forgive me, Sire,



I know the same light as of Guru Nanak Dev illumines your being but I am a sceptic and wouldn't be convinced until I had *Darshan* of the Great Guru." Continuing the narration of his experience he told me, "Guru Arjan Dev ran his palm down his beard and muttered something. And Lo! Guru Nanak Dev was there before my eyes. Bedazzled by the glare of his splendour I could only catch a fleeting glimpse and soon swooned and fell at his feet—unconscious!"

During the decade-long discourse, from the age of seven to seventeen when I had to go to Bombay to study architecture [1955-1960] at Asia's best-known institution: Sir JJ College of Architecture, enough of *Gurbani* had sunk into my unconscious mind to create ready receptivity and undiminished longing for investigating the Sacred Word's whys and wherefores when I grew up old enough to do so convincingly. Eventually I earned my second PhD on my research titled "*CREATIVE MYSTICISM: A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japji*". It was honoured by Sri Har Krishan Educational Society as the Best Doctorate done in 2000 at the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University. I established Guru Nanak Bani as the Revealed Word, *not* a rehashing or syncretism of Hindu and Islamic metaphysics as scholars; big and small, have *ad nauseum* shown it to be. Moreover, I introduced Creativity to analyse and

assess the validity and veracity of Mysticism that has been dubbed as the "religion of the élite". Enlarging the scope of my investigation I, introducing an architect's view of *Gurbani*, I eventually showed how Japji is a 38-storey *Skyscraper of the Soul* and produced a 3D computer image of Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation. When during my viva voce examination I showed it to the external examiner he spontaneously exclaimed: "Ah! It looks so sacred!"

My soul thus set afire helped me win Government of India Senior Fellowship for the study of Sikh historical monuments. I followed it up studiously and earned my third PhD on my research titled "*SRI HARMANDAR SAHIB: A Study of Architecture, Engineering, and Aesthetics*" in 2008. My scholastic investigation went on to establish that *Sikh Architecture* is a valid architectural style just as we have Hindu, Islamic, and Christian forms exhaustively written about in History of Architecture books worldwide.

This book is a product of my ongoing study with focus on Guru Nanak's Revelation and what it offers to devout to lead a life that finds its contentment in unceasing socially-beneficent activities making the seeker an active partner with Lord God in furthering His purpose and programme in the created world. I dare say mine is not a routine write-up of the kind that professional scholars tend to produce. It is

backed up by a treasure trove of versatile artistry rooted in Creative Mysticism as my family's invaluable legacy across a few centuries. My ancestors built the *Badshahi Masjid* at Lahore during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. My father designed two historic monuments of Sikh Architecture [his article on this subject can be read on the Internet]: Panja Sahib, Hasan Abdal [now in Pakistan] and *Takht Sri Kesgarh*, Anandpur Sahib. What it amounts to is nothing short of a unique contribution sprung from *Gurbani* assimilated for workaday existence artistically transformed into Three-Dimensional icons as *Gurdwaras*.

Another aspect that I must share, even at the cost of being branded as self-praise, is this: Rae Bular who was town head of 'Talwandi' was a Muslim 'Bhatti' Rajput—and had the distinction to be the first outside Mehta Kalu's household to discern the divine in Bal-Nanak. The Guru's sister Bebe Nanaki was the first at home to know and assert that her younger brother was Lord God's messenger sent for the emancipation of the whole world. Since my ancestors were 'Bhattis' I fondly feel that my family has a psycho-spiritual historical link with Guru Nanak Dev *via* Rae Bular Bhatti's indulgences recorded in *Janamsakhis* [hagiographic accounts of Guru Nanak's life]. As discerning readers will bear me out that my interpretation of the life and work

of Guru Nanak are very different from what career-scholars have written about the subject.

I have deliberately arranged the text of my book in 13 Sections to echo Guru Nanak Dev's famous Modikhana Sultanpur Lodhi episode that speaks of his *Samadhi* [divine-absorbed state of consciousness] when he lost count of the weighments of food grains that he was dealing out on reaching the number '13'—and started chanting: "Tera, Tera..." [Punjabi word for 'Thine'] which, in communion with Lord God, meant, "It's Thine; It's Thine!"

This book especially written for the purpose is my humble tribute to Guru Nanak Dev on the sacred occasion of his 550th Birth Anniversary that is being celebrated worldwide with utmost devotion and enthusiasm. Contained in this tome are 41 sonnets whose subject matter echoes its central theme and my poetic rendering in English of the entire Japji in rhymed verse. Selection of sonnets is from my anthology titled *Songs of the Soul* that was published by RoseDog Books, USA, in 2010. It contains 275 fourteen-line verses on diverse subjects, disciplines, and issues of global import—written as a reaction to William Shakespeare's 154 sonnets, inspired by my partial study of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and prompted by Gyani Sant Singh Maskeen's marvellous discourses on *Gurbani*. His quick grasp, and profound understanding of the Sacred



Word was so enormous and his ability at its exposition so distinguished that I call him the “Socrates of India”.

It is a healthy and happy gesture that in November 2019, the whole world will be celebrating the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev—in deference for his truly timeless-universal message for the general weal [*Sarbat da Bhala*] of all peoples inhabiting the Globe. In Punjab, India, the Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, on 23 November 2018, launched year-long preparations for the celebrations of the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, Founder of the Sikh Faith.

Government of India has decided to celebrate the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev with much fanfare in 2019. Indian Missions spread across the world, including the Indian High Commission in Singapore along with the various State Governments of India, would celebrate the anniversary on a grand scale. Indian Missions will organise special events on the occasion.

- Government of India has decided to build and develop ‘Kartarpur Corridor’ from Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak (Gurdaspur District in Indian Punjab) to the international border to facilitate pilgrims to visit the historical Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan. In this regard, the

Government of India will request Pakistan to develop a corridor with suitable facilities on their territory as well. This will help in realizing the long-pending demand of the Sikh community to be able to visit Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib where the Founder of the Sikh Faith had spent the last 18 years of his life.

- The historic town of Sultanpur Lodhi which is associated with the life of Guru Nanak Dev will be developed as a ‘Heritage Town’.
- Chairs of Guru Nanak Dev will be set up in one university each in the United Kingdom and Canada by the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- A Centre for Interfaith Studies will be established at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, Punjab.
- Government of India will release commemorative coin and postage stamps.
- An international seminar on Guru Nanak Dev’s life and ideals will be organized in New Delhi.
- Doordarshan [Indian TV] will arrange live telecast of programme on Guru Nanak Dev.
- A train passing through different holy places associated with Guru Nanak Dev for pilgrims and tourists will be run by the Indian Ministry of Railways.

- Activities like Kirtan, Katha, Prabhat Pheri, Langar, etc. will be organised throughout the country, especially at the places associated with the Sikhs' First Guru.
- *Gurbani* [Sikh Scripture] will be published in different languages by the National Book Trust of India.
- UNESCO will be requested to translate and publish anthology of the writings of Guru Nanak Dev in world languages.
- Special events will be organized by Overseas Indian Missions to commemorate the 550th Anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev.

I close this write-up with a quatrain that is a poetic rehashing of the Guru's three-prong formula: *Kirat Karo*; *Vand Chhako*; and *Naam Japo*. It is followed by another four-line verse as reiteration of the divine message from a different angle.

Earn your honest livelihood
Share it with the fate-stricken
Chant the Holy Name for global good
And ferry across the worldly ocean



In happiness, thank God
In distress, to Him pray
Life's course is often odd
Remember Him all the way

I would also like to place on record my deep appreciation and gratitude to the personalities who offered help and encouragement in the writing of this book. Dr Jagir Singh promptly furnished information with respect to various *Shabads* that I have quoted in the text. Urged by Professor HS Virk I have dilated upon the theme of 'NAAM'. Artist Prof Ravinder Sharma has designed beautiful book-cover and typed my two Urdu poems on Guru Nanak Dev in Devanagari script; Dr Ali Abbas typed them in Persian-Arabic script; and Ar Ramandeep Singh typed them in Gurmukhi script. 🌿

—Dr SS Bhatti

CHANDIGARH: 24 June 2019



In Pauri 32 of *Japuji Sahib* [See my poetic rendering reproduced below], Guru Nanak Dev sketches the enormity and near-impossibility of the titanic task of how a mere human could beyond all shadow of doubt become Lord God--ultimately.

If man's one tongue were to multiply into one lakh, and thence
Become twenty times as many more at that
Were each tongue to move a hundred thousand times in utterance
Of God's Holy Name, forever aiming at
Unrelenting, uninterrupted, devotional remembrance
Treading this path, he would keep climbing His stairs
Till his 'self' dissolves into Lord's quintessence
Tales of saint's glorious ascent won't catch unawares
Even the worms—to follow suit with devotion, thence
Truth is revealed, Nanak, by God's own grace
Though the self-avowed brag of alternative ways



The Guru says that if my one tongue were to multiply to one lakh, nay, 20 times as many, and each were to chant Lord God's Holy Name one lakh times, the ground for spiritual journey would have been well prepared for treading the path of divinity where the vertical journey begins. Many people including the learned and lay alike confuse spiritual endeavour with mere good deeds. Guru Nanak Dev has cleared this once and for all saying that good deeds could certainly get the beneficiary superior vesture but salvation can be had only by God's grace. Interestingly, to my observation, knowledge and experience, progress in the Objective World of Matter is measurable because it consists in the acquisition of material commodities—whose unfailing measure is wealth in terms of millions, billions, and trillions. It is, therefore, essentially a horizontal expansion of possessions because it keeps you matter-bound and tied up to terra firma always, invariably preventing your flight into the celestial realm. However, the Guru is drawing our wandering attention to the Subjective World of Mind which is immeasurable even though its physical dimension is merely 18 inches of spinal column from the anus to the crown of the head moving up through what the ancients had called Seven *Chakras* [Psychic Energy Centres].

Unfortunately, all our traditional thought veered round to what Jiddu Krishnamurti had called the “mechanics” following which it is easier to get lost in the labyrinth of means and methods rather than move upwards towards our destination that lies in what has been named “*Dasam Dwar*” [Tenth Door]. In the Creator's ingenious design of the human being all the other Nine Doors open outwards to the World of Matter. Guru Nanak Dev has salvaged the Quintessence of Self-Realisation leading to merger with Lord God with exclusive focus on the Holy Name—an uphill task that turns out to be well-nigh impossible to accomplish despite its awesome deceptive simplicity.

Simple calculations would lay the matter bare to convincing even the die-hard sceptic. 20 lakh tongues, each one chanting the Holy Name one lakh times works out to 20 billion times. Assuming you could chant the *Mantra* at the rate of 500 per minute to complete the onerous exercise would require four hundred million minutes which translate into 761+ years. Obviously one life-span is far from adequate for this Himalayan psycho-spiritual workout assuming that you are doing only NAAM-JAAP, with nothing else to distract your God-glued attention, during so many of these lives. But then the guarantee given by the Guru is worth the trial because he says that if you so climb the divine stairs and reach the topmost rung of the divine ladder you would have become Lord God Himself! Unlike other leaders of World Religions Guru Nanak Dev stresses the crucial point with an inescapable moral punch that this, indeed, is the one and only ONE WAY of a Human becoming GOD, and there are absolutely no alternatives to it.



2



PROLOGUE

You are welcome to the domain that this book attempts to create for spiritual realities to light the space with the cold splendour of truth so that humility is invoked to receive divine sacrament couched in the Word [*Shabda*] that Guru Nanak Dev serves on a platter to all peoples inhabiting the planet earth regardless of their castes, colours, creeds, conceits, and ethnic eccentricities. The Guru's Birth Anniversary [*Prakash Diwas*] is being celebrated worldwide with fullness of faith, fervour, festivity, and camaraderie. He brings the message straight from *The Source* [*Dhur ki Bani*] as revealed to him by *Waheguru* who willed that it should be spread across the globe. Humility is psychosomatic receptacle without which God's grace cannot be received. This is why Guru Nanak made it the Cardinal Principle of the Sikh Faith which is based on his *Revelation*. Unlike

what some scholars have tended to show and many gullible people believe them, *Sikhi* is certainly not a rehashing of existing religious dispensations, notably, Hinduism and Islam. The least that an earnest seeker could do to be a fortunate beneficiary of Guru Nanak's divine sacrament [*Gur-Parsad*] is to shift the orientation of his Mind [*Manmukh*] to that of the Spiritual Preceptor [*Gurmukh*].

At the outset, I would like to take up two moot issues concerning the Sikh Faith so that at least my point of view is clear to my readers: (1) Some scholars who follow the Sikh Faith have stubborn aversion for the sound of the sacred word "Omkar" and in unnecessary resistance insist that the new coinage "Oankar" is original and has nothing to do with the centuries-old "*Gur-Mantra*", and (2) at least there is one scholar of the same clan who has gone a step



further to declare that “Ik Oankar” [ੴ] Guru Nanak Dev’s Timeless-Universal *Guru-Mantra* is no more than a “Logo” used by the Prophet of *Sikhi*. Regarding the first one I would like to draw your attention to the scientific corroboration that “OM” has recently received. *Om* is an ancient *mantra* that is used in Hinduism and Buddhism. In the Hindu tradition, the sound of *Om* is said to contain the entire universe. It is the first sound from the beginning of time, and it also encompasses the present and the future. As such, its importance and power are difficult to overstate.

While this may be a tall claim it is helpful to note that the single-syllable word consists of three letters and their corresponding sounds: A+U+M. The first two are vowels and the third is a constant. ‘A’ can be pronounced with open mouth. ‘U’ requires manipulation of the lips to get the right modulation. “M” can be sounded only with closed lips. The beauty of these three letters is that they are found in all languages of the world and, by implication, as the Indian Rishis of yore averred the three sounds, respectively, invoke the three principal deities of Hinduism; *Brahma* [Creator] *Vishnu* [Provider], and *Shiva* [Destroyer]. NASA has reportedly recorded sounds from Sun’s atmosphere—and there was much excitement that it resembled the sound of “OM” that had been recognised

centuries ago through meditation [not the materials and methods of Science] by the Indian *Rishis*. If this be true the sound cannot be called Hindu sound because sounds are universal and, as in the present case, the sound of OM was there before its discoveries by the Seers and its recent corroboration. According to Gyani Sant Singh Maskeen Guru Nanak and Bhagat Kabir call this Primal Sound “Omkar”. To pronounce it as “Oankar”, not “Omkar”, just to show that it is new and belongs to the Sikh Faith is unfair, especially when its Founder-Prophet says that every word that he has uttered comes from *The Source*, which is One and the Same for all Religions. The scientific view [i.e., the rational—as Guru Nanak insists that we make use of ‘*Aql*’—is that like Evolution has taken place in every field Religion is no exception. Thus “Oankar” could be treated as distinct to meet the preference of pronunciation which is not the same thing as insisting on its originality because originality is a feudal concept. Following this line of thinking we would walk into the same trap as Brahmins have done through the centuries in desperate attempt to prove everything that is worthwhile had come to them first—and they stay as its originators.


(2) Let us first try to understand what “Logo” means and what it does. A “Logo” is a graphic representation or design or symbol of a company

name, trademark, abbreviation, etc. It is designed in such a manner as to attract attention, hold it, and then imprint its form and shape on the viewer's psyche. The idea is that the Company's 'Corporate Identity' that the 'Logo' bears could find permanent place in public memory for ready recognition. The aim is simple: it is an important part of the marketing strategy so that the Company's wares become a "Brand Name" and sell better than other MNCs' [Multi-National Companies'] merchandise. It achieves its aim as a "Symbol", which is derived from an idea or image that has been emptied of personal meaning. For example, the image of a woman breastfeeding her baby in painting or sculpture transcends the obviousness of "Mother and Child" in order to suggest something subtle and universal. In this case, it is "Love and Tenderness" [Mother's instinct to create these feelings and their evocative expression]. But a *symbol* is always seen rather than read and heard. However, "Ik Oankar" [ੴ] coined by Guru Nanak Dev is chanted and heard countless number of times every day across the globe as well as seen when you recite *Bani* from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* or Prayer Book [*Gutka*]. Therefore, to call it "Logo" [and say it is "one word"] is unpardonable sacrilege. Only an illiterate or ignorant person would commit it in the name of scholarship or scholastic investigation. In any case, "Ik Oankar"

is not a word; it is composed of a 'Numeral' [੧] and the open 'Oorha' [ੴ]. By this token, it is not at all a "Logo" because Guru Nanak Dev was not marketing it as merchandise of the Sikh Faith—it just dawned on him because the Lord had chosen him for an unprecedented divine mission.

In the Sikh Faith, *Simran* [an unbroken remembrance of God in heart-lacerating longing for communion with Him] is the Soul-Bride's strictly private romance with the Divine Groom. When it is sustained for a long enough period it relapses into spiritual coitus resulting in orgasm called Bliss [*Ananda*]. Incidentally, Bliss alone is the correct word for Ananda because it has no antonym! Sikh Faith has the unique distinction of insisting that the seeker, if he is truly bent upon playing the Game of Love, comes to the Guru's street with his head on his palm. It is common knowledge that all hospitals when they receive in the Emergency Ward a patient who was involved in accident or had suffered heart attack, typically record in their entry register this weird observation: "Brought dead". However, in Sikh Faith, the Guru makes it a healthy precondition that the seeker, sorely stung by passionate earnestness and restless longing, comes to him as voluntarily dead [*not* suicide] because God's divine power would be demonstrated only on bringing the patient back to life through "Spiritual Resurrection".





My research [which had fetched me my second PhD in 2000] has convincingly shown that Guru Nanak's *Bani* is neither Metaphysics, nor Mythology, nor the Muse, nor even Mysticism as 'religion of the élite'. It transcends the domain also of Science that has not been able to belie any of the Sikh Faith's tenets so far. For my part, I have repeatedly proven to myself that the deeper I know of Science, its methods, and findings, the profounder my understanding of and deeper my faith in *Gurbani* gets. I have, therefore, always recommended that all seekers ought to acquire reasonable knowledge of four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. It is also necessary to have some proficiency in the languages in which *Gurbani* has been recorded: Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Braj, Khari Boli, and so on. Although *Gurbani* is in verse form, it is not poetry. In its case, Poetry is the Language of Prophecy. All prophets are poets although all poets are not prophets. Poetry is verse-writing; a form of man-made literary art. It is thus *not* right to call *Gurbani* 'sacred literature'—when Guru Nanak calls it "*Dhur Ki Bani*".

To become a worthy beneficiary of *Gurbani*, it is imperative to know the customs and cultures of the many varied faiths and places visited by Guru Nanak Dev during his missionary journeys [*Udasis*] spread over 25 years entailing a distance

of 28,000 kilometres that he largely traversed on foot with his lifelong companion Bhai Mardana, the rebeck-player. In my second PhD on Japji I had christened Guru Nanak *Bani* as "Creative Mysticism" in preference to the popular term "Religion" because it has fallen from grace by the misdeeds of leaders of different faiths. It is common practice to underscore the near-impossibility of telling someone what Mysticism is all about by saying "It is jaggery eaten by a dumb fellow who knows the taste but cannot tell what it is." This must be the reason that some wit has dubbed Mysticism as "religion of the élite". Guru Nanak has proven this wrong; that is why I had to coin the term "Creative Mysticism" for his Revelatory Utterances [*Dhur ki Bani*]. He had the uncanny ability to communicate [using Creativity as 'Expression'] his esoteric knowledge of Truth [Mysticism as 'Experience'] in the language of the masses living in different parts of the world. He succeeded in doing so by using a mode of expression that transcends the grammars, scripts, and syntaxes of peoples of the world. This unique language is Love—the Guru calls it the only language that God uses, understands, communicates and blesses with. Even animals we know to be lower than us humans on the Ladder of Evolution understand Love and respond to it with open-hearted receptivity.

The foregoing wherewithal requires active support from firsthand knowledge of people's many varied cultures, customs, and callings. In this light, divine was Guru Nanak's message, and divine too were his communication skills because he deployed the eccentricities and differences inherent in the stated areas to conjure up tell-tale metaphors to dilate upon moot points in innumerable discourses that he gave and the discussions that he held with the lay and the learned at different places. For example, when interacting with farmers he used farming as a launching pad and would build up the language of his message turning the terminology associated with it into evocative metaphors.

This brings me to the point that I must stress in saying that those who desire palpable benefits from *Gurbani*-recitation ought to have working knowledge of several different fields covered in the Guru's discourses and discussions. I give just two examples to illustrate the point. Dr GS Bachan [former professor of Guru Nanak Dev University, and a geographer by profession] has written an entire book on 'Ecology' using *Gurbani* as the source. Long ago, I had invited a retired Chief Forest Officer of the Punjab Government to speak on trees in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. His presentation was so profound and soul-stirring that I felt the reading of *Gurbani* is no easy task despite its deceptive

simplicity—because in my reading of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that took me four years I did not come across anything concerning the two stated disciplines! To validate the strange thesis further let me share with you my experience of having read the Holy Book. Trained professionally in Architecture and Town Planning, I was facilely able to identify the contents of two *Shabads* [out of 40] by Guru Ravidas that dilate upon these two disciplines of paramount interest to all Humankind in a manner and profundity that the best of world's professional architects and town planners have so far not done. Subsequently, I wrote a comprehensive article that was published in *The Tribune* nearly three decades ago. Ravidasias have found my write-up to be a classic and often used it in their publications to hail their Guru. Ravidas's example like many other unlettered Saints, notably, Prophet Muhammad, proves another thing. It must be grasped by those who have irretrievably been conditioned into believing that the only knowledge that is worthwhile obtaining can be had only from school, college, and the university.

There are two crucial things to learn: (i) The so-called Secular Knowledge that pretends to steer clear of the contaminating contact of Religion and the polemics that it generates is no more than a compendium of innumerable 'Skills' that help you



find your way about in the World of Matter and achieve success, and (ii) Religious Knowing is True Knowledge because it belongs to the Subjective World that helps [that no ‘Skill’ however high or amazing it may be can ever achieve] the seeker find his way back home. Interestingly, those who have the best Knowledge as in (i) and those who have acquired ‘Skills’ as in (ii) have one thing in common: They are few and far between in the world. Think of Guru Nanak, Prophet Muhammad, Jesus Christ, Buddha—and Einstein, Vinci, Goethe, Corbusier—but the two categories are not at all comparable by any stretch of imagination. Incidentally, the world’s “Secular Knowledge” was created by those few who were self-taught by virtue of which they came closer to the second category—and, by an inner compulsion, tended to be theists [Read “God Evidence” that I have added to this book].

Having worked in 55 disciplines/subjects conscientiously since 1961 and made versatile creativity a habit of mind in my approach to the understanding of what all we humans do—consciously or unconsciously in umpteen different ways—I am convinced that the understanding of *Gurbani* is not a matter of scholastic investigation presented in glib gobbledygook. It is far more and different a pursuit that an earnest seeker can profitably follow only if he first equips himself well with the knowledge of what I have listed below:

Social mores. Cultural. 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 Goddesses. Heavens. Hell. Language: Knowledge of Sources of Metaphors: Farming. Gold Smithy, Jogi, etc PLUS the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. Poetry. Mythology. Mysticism. Philosophy. Culture. Custom. Rites. Rituals.

For ready reference, I am also furnishing hereunder a list of words whose meanings I have deciphered by a process I call “de-ACRONYM-isation”. Invented by me two decades ago, I have used the method to advantage to compile an entire dictionary. Titled “WORDS”, this book was published in 2013 by Red Lead Press, Pennsylvania, USA. “De-ACRONYM-isation” is my word for an approach I have developed to facilitate the understanding of LANGUAGE that should take you beyond the literal and limited meaning of “*a body of words and the systems for their use common to a people of the same*”

*community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition” to something more striking and universal, encompassing life in its many-splendouredness—and actively involving the basic human faculties like Emotion and Reason in their never-ending struggle to capture the aspirations of the *Homo sapiens* species as extensions of the human instinct for gregariousness.*

- TRUTH = Time Reflecting in the Universe Timeless Holism
- BEAUTY = Benediction Expressing and creating Awareness of the Universality of Truth by transcending the limits of Yin-yang principle of countless opposites
- GOODNESS = Grace that Overwhelms Ordinarity by Divinity’s Natural Empathy Selflessness and Sumptuousness
- READ: Receive Empathise Apprehend Digest
- REALITY: What has the exclusive Rights to Exist despite All Likes/dislikes of Individuals who deliberately or in ignorance Turn their backs on the Yin-yang principle
- REFLECT: Relate Empathise Fathom Love Express Creatively the Truth so revealed

- RELIGION: Reason Emotion Love Insight Gumption resulting in Informed Outlook that becomes second Nature [a habit of the mind Guru Nanak Dev called ‘*Sahj*’ or unconditioned spontaneity in Thought, Word, and Deed]
- RELIGION: Realisation in Earthly Life by Identifying it with God as manifest in Inner and Outer Natures
- RELIGION: Relating Entire Life by Intuition to God so that Inner (Mind) and Outer (Matter) Natures are integrated and synergised into one experience of diverse spiritual realities
- RELIGION: Reminder that Empathy rooted in Love is intrinsic to Godhood because it is its Inclusive Outreach Nativity
- RELIGION: Rituals as Expression of Life Identified with God by Ignoring it as an Offshoot of Nature
- RELIGION: Emphasis on Rituals makes religion Exclusive and you Lacerate and Incriminate others to the point of Gunning them down Indiscriminately sometimes Outdoing Natural calamities in the casualties’ score



This book carries my views on Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation as recorded in his Prime *Bani*. The Section concerned bears the title "*An Architect's View of Japji*". To this, I have added my Poetic Rendering of *Japji* in English that would help those unfamiliar with the Punjabi language to know how I, as an architect accustomed to visualising Architectural Designs for diverse Building-Types in three dimensions, view the Guru's historic contribution on which he had founded the Sikh Faith. 41 Sonnets are also contained in this volume. These I have selected from my anthology titled *Songs of the Soul*. I had written these 14-line verses inspired by *Gurbani* and my architectural understanding of it.

Another unusual addition is a compendium of choicest quotes on Religion authored by the world's outstanding Scientists to underscore my firmly-held view that Science and Religion are *not* opposed to each other. Different only are their approaches and methods of apprehending the Universe [the Phenomenal World vis-à-vis the Noumenal World, respectively] and the role of the *Homo sapiens* [Man, the Wise] species in the uncharted realms of Adventure of Ideas. To my mind, the two disciplines are complementary as these enlightened souls whose quotes are given in the book have demonstrated from their lifelong experience, and enriched the world with their priceless contribution. A similar purpose is

intended to be served by "*Glossary of Some Mystical Terms Frequently Used in Gurbani*" that has been added to the book.

I have tried to make each Section self-sufficient in a sense that you could read the book from anywhere without feeling that its contents are 'islands' of unrelated thoughts and views. In doing so, it may not have the continuity of narration as is indispensable in a novel or a novelette for building up the story around a preconceived plot, the book would certainly give you the impression that the Spiritual Realities sought to be presented and discussed here are an integral part of the religious ambience that the "Creative Mysticism" of Guru Nanak's unique Revelation conjures up.

I also suggest that the readers get in touch with the works of these following four outstanding scholars of the Sikh Faith to learn how to read *Gurbani* to derive maximum benefit from the time and energy spent on the exclusive exercise: Professor Sahib Singh, Giani Sant Singh Maskeen, Sant Waryam Singh, and Gyani Sahib Singh of Shahbad Markanda-Wale. Their short bio-sketches I am giving below.

Professor Sahib Singh (1892-1977) was a renowned Sikh academic who made a tremendous contribution to the exegesis of Sikh Scriptures. He was an exceptional grammarian, author, scholar, and theologian born in a Hindu family

in the village of Phattevali in Sialkot district of undivided Punjab. His scholastic proficiency was as profound as his devotion was deep. Whoever reads his books on *Gurbani* and the Sikh Gurus cannot do so without paying a tacit tribute to his unmatched genius and lifelong dedication by which he had put his formidable knowledge at the service of the Sikh Faith. His work is so voluminous that it may not be easily outdone in many years to come. The Sikh Faith is so much the richer for his awesome contribution. Whenever I read his books, renewed interest erupts in my being and much benefit accrues to me from such an exercise—progressively illuminating as it does my understanding and my expanding consciousness.

Giani Sant Singh Maskeen (1934-2005) was the most venerated and best known religious scholar among the Sikhs. This was due to the fact that he had an in-depth, broad knowledge of *Gurmat* and *Gurbani*, as well as profound understanding of Comparative Religion in terms of Inter-Faith Dialogue. His excellent art of delivery allowed him to make use of his vast database to make the most difficult relations and concepts easy of gumption. He was honoured by the Sikh community with the rare title of “Panth Rattan” for his services to humankind through the message of *Gurbani*. His exceptional art of *Gurbani* exegesis combined with mesmeric

communication skills is unparalleled. He was a polyglot with rich repertoire of poetry in different languages that he spontaneously deployed in explaining difficult themes and topics. I call him the “Socrates of India” whose genius is hard to outrival.

Sant Waryam Singh [1917-2001] was born to religious parents who were deeply connected with the Sikh Faith. He was baptized [*Amrit-Paan*] at the age of 4. He started reciting *Gurbani* and *Jaap* [repetitive recitation] of *Guru Mantra*, and took to meditation during his schooldays. His knowledge of *Gurbani* was phenomenal and his style of discourse lovable. He could explicate difficult words and esoteric passages with apt quotes from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* with unmatched felicity of expression. Although I have heard only a few of his discourses on YouTube yet I feel that I should have done so much earlier and more comprehensively because what he offers is so tremendously rich that it would require lifelong learning purely as an act of devotion to *Wah-i-Guru*.

Gyani Sahib Singh Shahbad Markanda-Wale is a renowned Sikh philosopher and exegete who teaches *Gurbani* and delivers sermons on the sacred subject in an engaging manner. His approach is much like a family elder who is teaching young children with abiding concern and care with subtle persuasion to get them



interested in the esoteric subject matter as serious pursuit. I am convinced that anyone who is fortunate enough to get lessons from him can never go wrong in the recitation of *Gurbani* that

requires absolutely flawless pronunciation, correct pauses, meditative reflection, and rapt attention—all of which light a fire within for lifelong engagement in socially beneficent activities 🌿

—SSB






3



LET'S BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

As a teacher of Architecture—world's only discipline that is truly holistic encompassing as it does vital inputs from all fields of human endeavour, notably, the Humanities, Art, Science, Engineering, Technology, Environment, etc; I have learned and taught that to get to the truth of design of diverse building-types one must go back to the beginning because everything is purest at the source. For example, the Ganges is irremediably polluted but Gangotri always basks in its pristine glory by virtue of its uncontaminated purity. I am applying the same time-tested formula in the writing of this book. In this case, however, the beginning goes back to billions of years when the Big Bang of God's *Creative Mysticism* had occurred and the universe was born.

This eventful Genesis of the Universe Guru Nanak Dev has captured with unmatched divine brilliance in his *Shabad* [hymn] *Arbad Narbad Dhundukara*... given below in poetic rendering:



For good many ages, there was
all-darkness
And the infinite and illimitable God was
seated in deep trance
The Lord sat all alone in pitch inky darkness
The world of perpetual strife was then
not in existence
For countless ages, there was utter
darkness with neither dale nor hill
There was no earth either and no sky
existed then
Pervasive alone was the infinite Lord's
inscrutable will
There was neither day, nor night, nor ever
moon, nor sun
God sat alone in profound trance infinitely
long and unbroken

*Jah aap rachio parpanch aakaar
Tihu gun meh keeno bisthaar
Paap pun tah bhaiyee kahaavat
Ko-oo narak ko-oo surag banchhaavat
Aal jaal maya janjaal
Haumai moh bharam bhay bhaar
Dookh sookh maan apmaan
Anik parkaar keeyo bakhiyaan
Aapan kheil aap kar deikhai
Kheil sankochai tao Nanak eikai*

When God Himself created the universe
with five elements
He went on to diversify it by deploying three
traits
Sin and virtue then entered into human arguments
One goes to hell; another yearning for
heaven waits
Worldly ensnares cast wide and Maya's lure
Egotism, attachment, doubt, and fear's weight
Pain and pleasure, honour and dishonour
These peoples of the world differently
explicate
He, however, Himself creates to watch
His own plays
When He winds them up, says Nanak,
He alone stays



It is important to understand God's three functions of Creation, Protection, and Destruction in the Cosmic Drama. Translated in the familiar parlance these are: Birth, Life, and Death. Birth and Death are points in Time. Life is a duration, conventionally called "three scores and ten" or "seventy years". What Scientists like Stephen Hawking call "intelligent design" and leave the matter at that is an assertion of ignorance because that 'intelligent design' is the handiwork of God which he arrogantly abhorred. This issue can be properly grasped only when we know that life must be sustained and maintained—and it needs food for this purpose. The wherewithal for Life was not only intelligently designed but also provided for millions of years before the Birth of Life. In our mortal understanding of the problem it means that the stock put in place to meet this basic need would require frequent refilling/replenishing. Guru Nanak Dev was shown this divine arrangement in his Revelation by Lord God and prompted to tell the world how it is. In Japuji's Pauri-31, the Guru makes it amply clear. Reproduced below is my poetic rendering in English of the Punjabi original to share with you how God does it so perfectly well with unfailing fore- and far-sight and palpable love for his creatures and creation.

PAURI-THIRTY ONE

The Lord's seat and His stores in
all realms exist
Inexhaustible are they, though he filled
them only once
He watches o'er all creation as He does persist
Nanak, just is God's dispensing munificence
Ceaseless salutations to Him is a devotee's
holy gesture
He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice,
and Imperishable
And, in all ages, He appears in
unchanging vesture



NANAK WAS A BORN PROPHET

The *Shabad* quoted below is unusual in that the first two lines were uttered by Bal-Nanak when his parents, concerned with strange behaviour suspecting he was ailing, had called the family doctor to restore his health. Four more lines were added by Guru Angad Dev, his successor, to develop it into a full-fledged *Shabad*. The message is fundamental importance and must be grasped in full. Bal-Nanak stricken with an aching desire to connect with Lord God displayed a condition

compounded of renunciatory longing for communion with Him, alarming disinterestedness in family and other relationships, a psycho-spiritual outspokenness that discountenanced Maya guile to get people into unbreakable human bondage, and a burning desire to remain uncontaminated in the midst of workaday existence; pure like lotus does in muddy water or water fowl that is unaffected by its tendency to wet it.

*Vaidu bulaaya vaidagi pakarh
dhandholei baanb*

*Bhola vaidu na jaanayi karahak kaleije maahe
Vaida vaidu suvaidu too paihlaan rogu pachhaan
Aisa daaru lorhi lauhu jitu vanjhai roga ghaani
Jitu daaru rog utthiahtani suku vasai aaye
Rogu gavaihi aapna ta nanak vaidu sadaaye*

[SGGS, Page 1279]

The physician was summoned; he lifted and
held my arm to feel the pulse
Simple-minded physician did not know that
the soul was afflicted, not the body
O physician, if competent, you must ensure
your diagnosis does not come amiss
Then prescribe a befitting treatment such as
could all the ailments remedy
Administer medicine that cures the disease and
restores to the body its bliss
Says Nanak: "If you restore your own health
you will be a perfect physician already"



To the Western mind hell-sunk in Materialism, with matching arrogance resulting from technological advancement, Bal-Nanak's would have been a fit case for psychiatric intervention. The psychiatrist blatantly unaware of such conditions in his entire lifelong medical career would have right away prescribed heavy doses of tranquillisers to put the ill-diagnosed 'patient' to somnambulistic peace. But, here the queer patient surprises the doctor with an equally strange diagnosis—which Guru Angad Dev [who added four lines to complete the *Shabad*] shows in divine light to be of a celestial genre. Therefore, in my view, if you are a genuine seeker suffering from heartache, you must not rush to the doctor but rather stay back home—in a long stillness of prayer and mental mode of thanksgiving—because Lord God has chosen you as a fit devotee to shower His grace upon.



TO KNOW GOD IS TO BECOME HIM!

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. Why? Because he begins with a hypothesis or theory or myth or preconceived ideas 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—would it really matter if I said, "No. It had occurred 10 billion years ago?" Either conjecture cannot be proven for or against.

Guru Nanak has stated this curious case with a divine flourish and finality of experience [*not* experiment] that we cannot ignore by saying 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'!



SAHJ

SAHJ is an important word in *Gurmat* [Sikh Faith] or the Guru's precepts; principle tenets. According to Gyani Sahib Singh, Shahbad Markanda Wale, *Sahj* has different connotations: slow and steady; knowledge; temperament; equipoise. However, I am using the word to mean "equipoise". It comes about when Body, Mind, and Soul are in perfect alignment psycho-emotionally. It is a state of mental and spiritual equipoise absolutely free from the intrusion of ego. It is unshaken natural and effortless serenity attained through spiritual discipline. Ego has a

key application in the Software [Mind] of the Human Computer. Ego (*Aham* or *Haumai*) develops out of the undifferentiated primordial being as a result of the socio-cultural conditioning factors that generate as a result of a process of individuation in which the Mind interacts with the Objective World. The process modifies the genetic inner nature that constitutes innocence from which guileless perceptions spring by its own impulse. Ego is thus a mere psychic substantive, a myth that not only begins to shroud the primordial nature of the human soul, but also is responsible for all kinds of psycho-emotional and volitional disturbances. When this ego is quelled, and one resides once again in the innate, undisturbed, effortless state of the soul, *Sahj* is said to have been attained. Although called a state (*Avastha*), in fact, *Sahj* transcends all states, for it is a return to the Soul as it was before any 'states' got differentiated or were derived from it.

A deeper significance of existence seems to emerge in *Sahj*. When one becomes oriented to it, emotional turbulence ceases. Pleasures and pains pass like ripples over the surface of consciousness while the mighty deep underneath remains unruffled. Then, it appears, one dons pleasures and pains just as one changes one's garments "*Sukhu dukhu dui dari kapare pahirahi jai manukh*" [SGGS, Page 149]. This is how *Sahj*



epitomises mental equipoise in which all turbulence of thoughts and emotions is calmed. The egocentrics abide in doubt and have anxiety-stricken minds giving them sleepless nights. In contrast, the Guru-oriented keep awake and sleep in *Sahj*—“*Manmukh bharmai sahasa hovail antari chinta neend na sovai/giani jagaih svaih subhayen/nanak nami ratia bali jaao*” [SGGS, Page 646]. Peace being the hallmark of this state, all running about in maverick pursuits cease. The mind restored to its original imperturbable state rediscovers its dignity in wholesome life. *Sahj* also is awareness of the great vital melody (*Sahj Dhun*) within oneself as a result of single-mindedness getting attuned to the inner rhythm of being. It is an echo of the “Music of Spheres” in the cosmic void. This rare experience gives the seeker an overwhelming joyous wonder. Although illumination, spontaneity, freedom, equipoise, and harmony may be described as the chief characteristics of *Sahj*, there are several others subtle ones: characteristics of this state alluded to at several places in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as in the following *Shabad*:

Abiding in *Sahj* the beneficiary looks
On friend and foe alike in relation
Heeding true essence no ill will brooks
His seeing itself becomes meditation

He sleeps in calm, and rises in peace
From ‘being’ to ‘becoming’ with natural ease
Sorrowful or happy, in *Sahj* he lives
Effortless his silence; spontaneous his utterance
In poise he eats, in poise he gives
And in *calmness* bridges many a distance
[SGGS, Page 236: English Rendition
by the Author]



Sahj is the hardest state to attain. It does not come about so long as one abides in *Maya* and its myriad maverick machinations. However, to become detached from *Maya* for attaining *Sahj* one needs *Gyan* more than *Karma*, which is obtained only by the Guru’s grace. Guru Amar Das says: “O brother! There can be no *Sahj* without the Guru’s benevolence. *Sahj* sprouts from the Word that enables one to meet the Lord—the True One. From the true Word emanates *Sahj Dhun* and one’s Consciousness [*Surt*] gets absorbed in Truth or Divine Essence”.

In simplest terms, I call *Sahj* “Unconditioned Spontaneity” because spontaneity can be affected too without being detected. The grandest example of this is the case of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He used to carefully write his speeches; then, rehearse them before full-length mirrors

with Lady Churchill in attendance for critical review until he would perfect it. When he delivered the speech in the House of Commons his skill at delivery was so awesome that everyone thought that the Prime Minister was speaking *ex tempore*. The same is true of film and theatre actors who have to cram their dialogues perfectly well before the scene is shot on camera. This is ‘conditioned’ or ‘artificial’, not natural, spontaneity. That is why I have called *Sahj* ‘Unconditioned Spontaneity’—a state of consciousness in which Body, Mind, and Soul are in perfect alignment so that thoughts, words, and deeds meld into a single holistic, socially beneficent action.

Guru Nanak, continuing his divine mission of simplifying *Dharma* [Cosmic Moral Law] to the hilt until “Creative Mysticism” falls within the reach of all and sundry, which could then be practised as “Pragmatic Spirituality”, has offered these simple prescriptions: There is no need to leave the household and retire to a monastery; you do not have to keep matted hair or besmear your body with ashes; or, as is patently prescribed, you must wear certain dress; willy-nilly conform to a restricted menu for your diet; and many other torturous practices that a Yogi or a Seeker following ancient Hindu religious practices must undertake in order to qualify as a fit and suitable disciple of misleading human Gurus.




AVOIDING WILD GOOSE CHASE OF METAPHYSICS AND FRUITLESS RATIOCINATIVE CEREBRATION

*Chhi-a ghar chhi-a gur chhi-a updeis
Gur gur eko veis anek
Baba jai ghar kartei keerat ho-ay
So ghar raakh vadaayi to-ay
Visuay chasia gharhia pahra thitee vaari
maahu hoa
Sooraj eko rut anek
Nanak kartei kei ketei veis*



Six schools of philosophy, six teachers, and six
sets of teachings are there
But their teachers’ Teacher is One (God)
appearing in many forms
Baba, follow that system in which paeans to
the Creator’s glory we hear
Because in such a system alone shines His
effulgent glory—beyond norms
Just as seconds, minutes, hours, quarters of a
day, lunar days, week days, months, lying bare
Are created by one and the same sun and so
spring many different seasons from it
Similarly, says Nanak, Lord God conjures up
many manifestations from His kit





It is said that Guru Nanak's hymn quoted above was in response to an earnest seeker's question that there are six Shastras in Hinduism; therefore, which one he should follow. Here, in this case, as elsewhere in innumerable examples, the Guru demonstrated that he was always in unbroken mystic trance [*Naam Khumari Nanaka charhi rahei din raat*] that results from a perfect communion with Lord God who alone was his True Spiritual Preceptor [*Satguru*]. Rather than drag his enquirer into ontological meanderings of Metaphysics which religious leaders invariably indulge, he reiterated the Unicity of Godhood and re-stressed the primal Truth that since God alone is the Creator of everything; even religious scriptures and discourses on matters of faith are inspired by Him as part of an inscrutable *Leela* [Divine Sport]. Since, therefore, as proclaimed by him *ad infinitum*, God is the destination and purpose of human life on Planet Earth. Anything that guides the seeker in that ultimate direction is true and selfless. Nobody with a burning desire in his heart of getting back to *The Source* should ever, even for a single breath, be forgetful of Him.

It is these innumerable reiterations recurring constantly in his 974 *Shabdas* [hymns] which empower me to assert that Guru Nanak's *Bani* is neither Metaphysics, nor Poetry, nor

Mythology, nor Science, not even Mysticism of the kind we know from experience as "religion of the élite". It is God's Word [*NAAM*] delivered hot from the oven of divinity to all peoples of the world regardless of their beliefs, colours, creeds, castes, classes, national prejudices, and ethnic eccentricities, meant solely for emancipating them from the stranglehold of *Maya* and the Marshland of Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride. Only Guru Nanak regards the created world of matter as relatively, *not* absolutely, *real*, unlike in Hinduism. Its misplaced assertions that *this* world is unreal [*Maya*] has postponed and transferred human initiative and spiritual endeavour until after death to the next world and, in return, emasculated the Indians to the point of being pitiable 'Masochists'. It is this single unfortunate factor that forced the country to bear the brunt of a millennium-old slavery.

ENLIGHTENED OBSERVER OF THE TERRESTRIAL AND CELESTIAL HAPPENINGS

The note reproduced below is an astronomer's attempt to resolve the mystery of the 'long star' and identify the eclipse that Guru Nanak records in his *Bani* as having personally witnessed it during his lifetime. Bangalore-based Dr RC Kapoor

writes in *CURRENT SCIENCE*, VOL. 113, NO. 1, 10 JULY 2017 [Historical Notes]:

“Two celestial occurrences find place in the incidents related to the great poet-Saint Guru Nanak (1469–1539 CE), founder of Sikhism, or in his teachings. The first one referred to as *Lamma Tara* (long star) figures in a hymn in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and the other is a solar eclipse that occurred while Guru Nanak was visiting *Kuruksheetra*. I conclude that the long star must be Halley’s Comet in its apparition in 1531. This is significant considering that the record of sighting of a comet in an Indian scripture has so far not been identified. Further, among the many eclipses occurring during the relevant period of 1498–1521, that of 13 January 1507 is the most probable one. The eclipse is historical in the sense that it is the first observational record to be depicted in an Indian mural.” Dr RC Kapoor has quoted the following lines from the Guru’s relevant hymn:

*Tārā chadhiyā lammā kiū nadari
nīhālīā Rām
Sewak pūr karmā Satiguri sabadi dikhālīā Rām*

The comet shoots across the sky.
How can it be seen with the eyes?

The True Guru reveals the Word of
the *Shabad* to His servant who has
such perfect *karma*

*Nanak haumai māri patīne tārā
chadhiyā lammā
Gurumukhi jāgi rahe chūki abhimānī Rām*

O Nanak, killing his ego, he is satisfied; the
comet has shot across the sky
The *Gurmukhs* remain awake and aware; their
pride is destroyed completely

Full *Shabad* reproduced below [with some errors in the above quote corrected] shows that God had blessed Guru Nanak with divine eye to discern His underlying spirit that sustains the terrestrial and celestial worlds. Connecting the two with Unconditioned Spontaneity [*Sahj*] and by maintaining perennial focus on Divine Dispensation he enables the seeker’s mind to remain on track in the midst of mesmeric mechanics of the Cosmos and complex myriad events of the Objective World vis-à-vis the supernal urges of the Subjective World. At any rate, this *Shabad* shows how wide awake Guru Nanak was who, unlike other god men of the world, keenly observed not only what was going on in the world around him on terra firma but also noted with meditative admiration the events taking place up in the sky.



Taara charhiya lamma kyon nadri
nihaaliya Ram
Sewak poor karamaan satigur sabdi
dikhaaliya Ram
Gur sabdi dikhaaliya sachu samaaliya
aihnisi dekhi beechaariya
Dhaawat panch rahe gharu jaaniya kaamu
krodhu bikhi maariya
Antara joti bhaiyi gur saakhi cheene
Ram karamaan
Nanak haumai maari pateene taara
charhiya lamma
[SGGS, Page 1110]

The comet has shot across the sky but, O God,
how eyes could see it moving away
God shows it to the Servant of perfect deeds as
the True Guru's Word gives him revelation
Guru reveals the Word and dwelling on its truth
he beholds and reflects on it night and day
Capturing the Five Inner Foes he finds home in
his heart, and kills lust, anger
and corruption
Guru's instruction has illuminated his
inner being, and he watches Lord's
wondrous *Karmic* Play
Having killed the ego, Nanak, he acquiesces
even as the comet across the sky shoots away



FIVE ELEMENTS

Five Elements that God has deployed in the creation of the universe are Sky (Space), Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. These are related to the five sensory organs we are endowed with: Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue, and the Skin. These are referred to as the Five Conventional senses called, respectively: Visual, Audial, Olfactory, Gustatory, and Tactile. However, these senses do not create anything new. They merely sense singly or in combination something to us from the External World of Objects, Humans, Animals, and Plants, and relay the relevant information to the brain via the stated organs. These elements help the five sensory organs to sense in their own unique ways what we encounter and experience in all places, all the time: We can feel cool breeze; hear sounds and voices; see and feel fire; taste the sweetness of water, and enjoy all that Mother Earth produces including the fragrance of flowers and the relish of fruits. Each of these Five Elements has a distinct property: Earth has odour; Water has taste; Fire has form; Air has feeling; and *Akaash* [Space] has sound. The qualities of the five gross elements are the objects of the five senses: nose, tongue, skin, eyes, and ears. Nose is the organ of odour; Tongue is the organ of taste; Eyes are the organ of form; Skin is the organ of sensation; and Ears are the organ

of sound. Without these Five Elements, there is no universe, no life! Therefore, it goes without saying that if we humans were not endowed with Five Sense Organs and Five Senses as extensions of the Five Elements we could not enjoy Life's many-splendouredness. Therefore, one effective form of *Simran* [Remembering the Lord] that *Gurbani* [Guru's Utterances] commends repeatedly would be to remember God in the midst of our illimitable enjoyments. Ingratitude is an unpardonable sin. I am giving below three quotes to support my view.

- “Ingratitude makes man an animal, even worse, for some animals do have a way of saying thank you when you do them a favour; take a dog for instance.”

—Paul Bamikole

- “We are given this beautiful life, this beautiful world, and we destroy it with ingratitude and hate.”

—Marty Rubin

- “Gratitude comes in a spectrum of colours, but Ingratitude is always black.”

—Ankala V Subbarao

Looked at in another way we could aver that because Lord God sees, we can see; because


He talks, we can talk; because He tastes, we can taste; because He feels, we can feel, and so on. In this light, Science's insistence that in the beginning there was a bunch of chemicals incredibly condensed into a single atom to cause the Big Bang that created the Universe and eventually these chemicals developed into the *Homo sapiens* species that could talk, hear, see, taste, feel, smell and touch, makes absolutely no sense. Creation invariably moves from subtle to gross, or from psychic to physical. As an architect, if I am to create a skyscraper its conception takes place in my mind filled with *Dhundukara*—nebula of the possibilities of architectural creativity. Conception [Subtle] is followed by thinking [the Humanities] progresses to amorphous form [Art], musters the help of calculations [Science and Engineering], uses latest process and products [Technology]—all these various stages are depicted in many different drawings and scale models until these are taken to the site to raise the structure [Gross]. Scientists unable to extend their imagination beyond the limits of Time-Space Continuum rest content with the romantic phrase “Intelligent Design” in utter ignorance of the fact that “Intelligent Design” cannot exist independent of an “Intelligent Designer”. *Gurbani* uncompromisingly stresses this moot point *ad infinitum* that Lord God is not only the



Intelligent Designer of the universe but also its Provider—and Destroyer.



THREE GUNAS



To diversify the creation so that no two objects, humans, animals, plants, birds, etc are identical Lord God used **Three Gunas**: *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* [*Satogun*, *Rajogun*, and *Tamogun*]. The *Gunas*, literally, are: attributes, qualities; forms or characteristics of Matter, Mind, and Energy; one or other of the three forces prevalent throughout all regions of the mind, governing the interplay of diversity in these realms of creation. Vedantic philosophy personifies these as Hindu deities in the triune concept of God: Brahma [*Rajas*, the Creator], Vishnu [*Sattva*, the Preserver], Shiva [*Tamas*, the Destroyer]. *Sattva* is Goodness that produces Preservation. *Rajas* is Passion that produces Creation. *Tamas* is Ignorance that produces Destruction. *Guna* depending on the context means “string, thread, or strand”, or “virtue, merit, excellence”, or “quality, peculiarity, attribute, property”.

All embodied souls have their vestures fashioned from the Five Elements and Three *Gunas* in infinitely varying proportions that account for the differences in their appearances, sizes, colours, capabilities, mentalities, intelligences, and so forth.

This case is akin to that of the Three Primary Colours—Red, Blue, and Yellow—which produce an incredible range of heart-enticing secondary and tertiary colours.

In my book titled “*An Odyssey into Mind*” [with a Foreword by Padma Vibhushan Professor DP Chattopadhyaya, foremost philosopher of India] published in 2016 by *White Falcon Publishing*, I have discussed a concept that I had developed in 1975 to show how God is Plus-Minus Zero ‘Creative Neutrality’. Subsequently, I applied this moot idea to the exposition of the Three *Gunas* thus: *Sattva*: Fulcrum, Present [Plus-Minus] representing Peace, Equipose; *Tamas*: downswing, Past [Minus] denoting Depression, Sadness; and *Rajas*: *Upswing*, Future [Plus] that stands for Excitability, Happiness.

Sattva is not merely a point of balance between *Rajas* and *Tamas*, but is also a point out of which *Rajas* and *Tamas* come into being. In a pendulum, the expression of potential energy in the upswing is *Rajasic* in nature, and the storage of that energy as potential, on the downswing, *Tamasic*. Here, the *Sattva Guna* is represented by the fulcrum—the point of suspension or origin, out of which *Rajas* and *Tamas* come into being. Time, which also arises in the region of the universal mind, is similarly experienced in these three modes: moving into the Future [*Rajas*], lying in the Past [*Tamas*], and the actual

point of experience, the ‘now’ which gives rise to both the Past and the Future—the present moment [*Sattva*]. Similarly, the energy of Space is the *Sattva* ‘Zero Point’ or ‘point’ of origin from which arises the physical universe and its (deceptive) duality.

These attributes are present in material forms in complex and convoluted mixture, but they are part of everything, an integral aspect of the Tapestry of Creation in the Mind-Worlds. They are the warp and weft of the fabric of existence in the physical, astral, and causal realms. They are means by which the mind-blowing complexity of creation is made manifest. They are also the cause of the ceaseless activities or *Chitta Vrittis* of the mind—at one moment active [*Rajasic*], at another Dull [*Tamasic*], and only very rarely in a state of Equipose [*Sattvic*]. “Chitta Vrittis” is Sanskrit term for ‘Mind Chatter’ or ‘Monkey Mind’ which, as you might guess, refers to the tendency of our minds to flit about from one thought to the next—ceaselessly.

FIVE KHANDS

KHANDS, in mystic parlance, are the regions of creation. Using this term, Guru Nanak has described the creation as consisting of five main realms, which are: (i) Dharam Khand, (ii) Gyan

Khand, (iii) Saram Khand, (iv) Karam Khand, and (v) Sach Khand.

- (i) *DHARAM KHAND*: Realm of Cosmic Moral Law; Justice; the physical universe of *Pinda*. The word ‘*Dharam*’ is pregnant with meanings. However, I am using it to connote “Cosmic Moral Law” meaning, among other things: duty, justice, and right, appropriate living, righteousness, and religion. These are all aspects of living in *this* world; hence, the term’s crucial importance in the comprehension of the Guru’s description of *Dharam Khand*.

Guru Nanak says that the ‘embodied’ souls in *Dharam Khand* are subject to seasons, and the passage of Time, and are enveloped by Matter in various permutations and combinations as a result of the bodies having been fashioned out of Five Elements [Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Space] and Three Gunas [*Satogun*, *Rajogun*, and *Tamogun*]. Creatures of various forms, shapes, and kinds live here, bearing diverse and endless names [Science has estimated that one trillion species exist on earth], all of whom are judged by their action [*Karmas*]. This, he avers, is Lord God’s design for the ‘mortal’ world:



The Realm of Righteous Action
abides in the stated way

Next is the Realm of Knowledge which
enchants by its working

There many forms of air, water, fire
which hold sway

There countless *Krishnas* and *Shivas* have
their dwelling

Numberless *Brahmas* are fashioning worlds, et al

Of many a form, colour, and bodily-ware

Many a karmic earth exists, many a
mount celestial

Many a sermon is delivered to
Dhruva out there

Many are the Indras, many the spheres of
moons and suns

Many are the continents, and the
lands galore

Many are the accomplished yogis, supreme
ascetics, enlightened ones

Many are the incarnations of Mother
Goddess evermore

Many are the species of gods, demons, celibates

Many are the oceans which gems produce

Many a mode is there which creatures creates

Many are the languages which they all use

There is many a lineage down which
kings descend

Many are God's devotees engrossed in
serving Him

But none of them, Nanak, knows any end

- (ii) *GYAN KHAND*, Realm of Knowledge, is described as a vast region with many continents, worlds, and underworlds, with numerous suns, moon and stars, and inhabited by angels, gods, goddesses, and deities, corresponding to the worlds of the Mind that lie beyond the eye centre [Third Eye Chakra]. It is called *Gyan Khand* because the realms of Mind are primarily blissful regions of diversity and activity that the soul and mind together perceive with great interest, understanding, and knowledge, rather than with deep love and devotion. Knowledge of this realm also provides profound comprehension of how things happen in the physical universe. Guru Nanak says:

The Realm of Knowledge is where
illumination holds sway

And mystic melody reigns amid sublime
visions and wonder

Enchanting beauty pervades the Realm
of Endeavour

Where matchless forms are forged everyday

So unique is their beauty that it beggars
all description

Whoever attempts it would be left
speechless, ashamed of his antics
Fashioned in that realm are absorption,
wisdom, and mind's illumination
Forged therein are the visions of innumerable
gods and mystics

(iii) *SARAM KHAND* is the Realm of Spiritual Endeavour, corresponding to the higher regions of the Mind. The Sound of this region, according to Guru Nanak, is full of beauty and attraction. This is a land of indescribable aesthetic charm and splendour. All aspects of Mind originate from here in fine and subtle form as described above by the Guru.


(iv) *KARAM KHAND* is the Region of compassion, mercy, and grace. This is the spiritual region beyond the Mind, but below *Sach Khand*. The soul experiences love and divine grace when it ascends higher than the realms of Matter and Mind. Within the regions of the Mind, the prevailing law is that of causality, justice, automatic action and reaction. Beyond that, the prevailing reality is that of love, compassion, forgiveness, and grace. According to

Guru Nanak, the Sound of *Karam Khand* is full of power and force. Here, duality ends and the soul realises by direct experience that its individual identity is a mere drop of pure spirit [divine essence]. Only brave and courageous souls reach here; that is, those devotees who have vanquished the forces of Mind and *Maya*. Here, their being is engrossed only by God, and they enjoy unmitigated bliss:

Might is the hallmark of the Realm of Grace
Where no one lives except heroes of
might supreme
An endowment received through constant
God-consciousness
Many Sita-like heroines are there of
surpassing esteem
Those who are with God in constant
communion
Never suffer mortality or anybody's guile
Dwell in there devotees assembled from
many a dominion
Cherishing true bliss in their hearts all the while
The Realm of Truth is where God
himself reposes
And casts His gracious glance, always
watching o'er



That realm houses all the continents
and universes
Whose limits nobody can by any means
even explore
Abide in that realm all forms of worlds
of creation
Untiring a-whirl in submission to His will
God sees them, enjoys them, in divine elation
To describe its limits, Nanak, is a task uphill



(v) *SACH KHAND*: This is the Realm of Truth, of real or true existence; the eternal realm; the region of eternal Truth; the soul's true home, also called *Sat Lok* by some Indian Saints. Guru Nanak says that the Formless Lord resides and presides here; works and oversees from here. The Creator surveys His entire creation within which His will and Edict-Fiat reign supreme. The glory of this realm of supreme bliss being ineffable, the Guru says that the wonders of this land are well nigh impossible to describe [see the verse given alongside].

According to a great many Mystics, God is the supreme power, and everything else is formed from Him as a projection or emanation when He so wills. In the hierarchy of creation, everything

below is a reflection of what lies above or deeper within. Similarly, what is above is contained in what is below. The Lord is within everything, and everything is actually His projection or emanation, His show, or Divine Sport [*Leela*]. He is encapsulated within everything; He is what gives it existence. From his point of view, therefore, everything is a simple and completely ordered affair. I am reminded of the marvellous couplet Dr Mohan Singh Diwana (1899-1984) who was a polyglot, scholar par excellence, accomplished mystic, and powerful poet:

*Jab Aadmi tha to kehta tha yeh aur
woh ghalat
Ban kar khuda jo dekhaa toh sab durust hai
As embodied soul Man grumbled over this and
that as wrong
When he rose to become God everything
was right and in order
*
As a tribute to his awesome genius I wrote
this couplet:

Sha'ir-o-Majzoob bhi 'Aalam bhi Mohan
Singh hain
Baat hai jo is qadar hain 'aashiq-i-
Diwana ham*

Mohan Singh is a poet, a mystic and an
outstanding scholar
That's some reason for me to be Diwana's
love-stricken admirer



GOD'S UNRIVALLED CREATIVE POWER

All creation is simply the ramifications of God's unrivalled creative Power. From the point of view of the soul within the creation, it is multi-level, multi-dimensional, intricately complex, interwoven tapestry that is by its very nature, scope, and immensity beyond comprehension. Mystics of all ages and cultures have said that there are other regions in the creation in addition to the physical universe perceived by the five human senses. They insist and reiterate that everything lies within Man. However, the situation is confounded by the fact that Mystics must necessarily describe the inner regions known to them from firsthand experience by means of physical language which we humans have fashioned from the materials and methods of *Maya*. This unique paradox, borne out of the existence of physical, astral and causal regions and the vain bid to describe them in terrestrial language, can never be grasped by a Scientist

whose mind is irretrievably conditioned by hypothesis, observation, measurement, and self-limiting laboratory experiments. To put it simply: Can Scientist be open-minded enough to accept the fact [which can neither proved or disproved] that contained within 18 inches of the human spine is a working mortal model of the entire universe which the Indian Mystics have described in terms of Seven *Chakras*, [Subtle Centres of Energy], beginning with Root Chakra (*Mooladhara*), Sacral Chakra (*Swadhishtana*), Solar Plexus Chakra (*Manipura*), Heart Chakra (*Anahata*), Throat Chakra (*Vishuddha*), Third Eye Chakra (*Ajna*), and Crown Chakra (*Sahasrara*).

Just as the womb of the mother creates the basic requirement for the growth of the embryo, the *Muldhara Chakra* forms the basis and the starting point for our spiritual development. It is the foundation from which we climb the ladder of the *Chakras*; the root from which we receive the nourishment for our spiritual development. For this reason, and because it lies at the lowest point of the spinal column below the Coccyx, it also bears the name "Root Chakra". *Kundalini Shakti* (Spiritual Energy) has its roots in the *Muldhara Chakra*, but it is in a deep, motionless sleep. When we awaken this slumbering potential that lies within the *Muldhara Chakra* we are able to work our way



up towards the light of knowledge and attain the fruit of Self-Realisation.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, the greatest thinker of the world, called such knowledge the ‘mechanics’ of man’s spiritual quest and discountenanced as wasteful of time, energy, and other resources. What he commended was ‘choiceless inner seeking’ in which an individual human person approaches the problem with full responsibility and without any conditioning of metaphysical and mythological know-how. Despite its deceptive simplicity the exercise turns out to be extremely tough—almost unattainable of goal. I am saying from personal experience of having learnt and practised various forms of meditation. The problem was revealed to me by the understanding of ‘hypnotism’ and ‘mesmerism’. In the former, which is nothing more than induced sleep, you could get tranquillising effect by repeating the name of your dog. The trick lies in the fact that repetition *ad nauseum* bores the mind to sleep! In the latter method, the expert makes passes over the body of the subject relaxing in a couch in order to transmit energy to him. If it really comes to pass the practitioner would feel tired and exhausted testifying to the fact that his energy has, indeed, passed on the patient. These and scores of other methods developed by quacks trick the patients into submission for moral and material exploitation. Multi-National

Companies [MNCs] deploy mass hypnosis through their TV and print-media ads endorsed by celebrities. The celebrities by their credibility established in a given field have mustered large fan following who are only too willing to be put to ‘induced sleep’ to be swindled until they are left wearing their birthday suits!

Guru Nanak, the greatest Prophet of the World, was painfully aware of how men in power exploited the meek and the hapless to turn them into eternal slaves in order to stay as their beneficent rulers. They used everything—muscle power, mental power, power of caste, creed, social status, learning, political clout and what have you—to achieve the one-point agenda of making people their slaves *en masse*. The Guru, therefore, sought to uplift the masses by means of what I call “Pragmatic Spirituality” that works by building self-confidence and life-affirming faith in divine dispensation. He offered the fruits of his Revelation on a platter to the lowliest of the lowly across the globe by the three-pronged formula of *Kirat Karo*, *Vand Chhako*, and *Naam Japo*.

Guru Nanak’s genius lay in that he could present the most abstruse and abstract in simple and concrete terms in the language of the masses so that they take full charge of their lives as God’s greatest gift. He thus helped them identify the spiritual aspect even in the mundane

by alluding to the contents of *Dharam Khand* as the essential foundation of human life. Insisting on earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow meant that the tenets of "Cosmic Moral Law" are strictly observed. Sharing one's earnings with the less-privileged meant that understanding of right and wrong was actually practised as warranted by *Gyan Khand*. Chanting God's Name meant that the person is in touch with *The Source* from which to draw psychosomatic strength [*Saram Khand*] for upholding morality in the midst of the corrupt and the base. In doing, and unaware of its ultimate benefits, the seeker was preparing himself as a suitable and fit receptacle of God's grace [*Karam Khand*]*—*from where if the Lord so willed he would be uplifted to gain entry into the *Sach Khand*.


FORCES OF NATURE

The four fundamental Forces of Nature are (i) gravity, (ii) the electromagnetic force, (iii) the strong force (strong nuclear force or strong interaction), and (iv) the weak force (weak nuclear force or weak interaction). Causality (also referred to as causation, or cause and effect) is efficacy, by which one process or state, a *cause*, contributes to the production of another process or state, an *effect*, where the cause is partly

responsible for the effect, and the effect is partly dependent on the cause. In general, a process has many causes, which are also said to be causal factors for it, and all lie in its past. An effect can in turn be a cause of, or causal factor for, many other effects, which all lie in its future. Many philosophers have believed that causality is metaphysically prior to notions of Time and Space.

As an architect trained in the conception, design, construction, supervision, and the raising of buildings *actually* on ground, I look upon *Gurbani* in the context of Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation in a way that cannot be easily reconciled with notions propounded and propagated by philosophers, scientists, poets, thinkers, and artists. Therefore, I have expanded the scope of the key word "NAAM" used by Guru Nanak Dev in expressing and communicating his Revelation. In addition to everything that has been dealt with in the subject matter of this book, I wish to suggest that "NAAM" encompasses the elements of Architecture of Creation, the cause and effect, the Forces of Nature, the principles, the materials, the methods, the strategies, the vision, the purpose, the process, the products, their interrelationships and interdependences, the problems pertaining to what we call expansion [Future], understanding and the use of what had happened in history [Past] and so forth.





I reiterate that Time is an Organic Whole *intellectually* split into segments, we feel, are easy of comprehension—Past, Present, and Future—providentially there yet remains what I call Creative Continuity among them. We use this divine virtue—albeit unconsciously—in our planning and development programmes to make sense of their intent, content, strategies, and implementation. For example, if we want to take a long leap into the Future we cannot avoid going back into the Past for the running distance that is perforce required to accomplish such an psycho-emotional athletic feat—much in the manner of an accomplished athlete who does it to win ‘Long Jump’ competition at the Olympics. In the electronics parlance, the Past is the hard disc drive [HDD]—and material pertaining to what we are doing in the Present in order to achieve what lies in the Future. The operating system, programme files, and all data files are stored on HDD in a computer. Human Brain is the HDD akin to Computer’s, only millions of times more complex and compact, with the Mind acting as the Software—it is impossible to function without Memory being there in the first place. I am inclined to think that, metaphorically, *SIMRAN* [God-Remembrance] is the activating of Memory that contains only *NAAM*, that is, Divinity’s Data Files from which the deadly virus of Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride has

been studiously removed to prevent the Human Computer, MIND, from crashing!

Because this entire project that I have attempted above to delineate at the Cosmic Scale presupposes a Creator and a Cause, Guru Nanak makes the matter crystal clear in *Asa di Var*:

*Aapeenai aap(u) saajio aapeenai
rachio NAAO*

*Duyi QUDRAT saajiai kar(i) aasan(u)
dittho chaao*

(Lord God) created Himself from His SELF
And christened Himself with the “NAME”
He followed it up by the creation of Nature
Within which He seated Himself
And He beholds His creation in divine euphoria
Thou art the Benefactor-Creator
And, by Thy Pleasure, Thou bestow
Thine Mercy

Thou art the Knower of all
Thou givest life, and with a word takest it
away again

Seated within the creation
Thou behold it in divine euphoria



Lord God’s Primal ‘Act of Creation’ was to
assume *Sarguna Saroop* or His manifest
Form from His *Nirguna Saroop* or Being
without Attributes.

*Balihaari gur aapne dioharhi sad vaar
 Jin(i) maanas te devate kiye kart n laagi vaar
 Daata karta aap(i) toon tus(i) devaih(i)
 karaih(i) pasaaoo
 Toon jaanoyi sab sai de laisain(i) jind(u) kavaao
 Kar(i) aasan(u) dittho chaaoo*

I am a sacrifice to my Guru, a hundred times a day
 He who shaped gods out of humans
 without delay
 By Thy unrivalled we are born and benefit
 As Ye will Thou grant life; then, withdraw it
 Seated carefree He in His entire creation
 Gladly beholds it in divine inebriation



CONCLUDING REMARK

I have attempted to show briefly the immensity, complexity, and diversity of the Universe which, it should now be obvious, is beyond human comprehension by any means, methods, devices, equipments, and instruments devised by the *Homo sapiens* species to unravel the Mystery of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction. To put the problem in its simplest terms, Guru Nanak has called Nature as the Manifest Power of God which, as the learned and lay have known from

common experience through the centuries, is far too formidable to manage, much less resist and control. Floods taking place at present in nearly all parts of the world testify to this glaring fact that even superpowers like America and China are utterly helpless in facing the challenges of nature [in this sense, this titanic power has been rightly called “Mother Nature”]. The Guru in mercy for the helpless and hapless humanity exhorts to the good sense intrinsic to the human brain to not waste time and energy on this impossible egotistic mis-(adventure) to probe the mystery. Instead he urges all humans to make the best of this life to realise the ‘self’ and thence the Godhood by *Jap* and *Simran* of the Holy Name of which there are innumerable versions but he is sacrifice to all of them because they are pious reminders of Our Common Creator. Since the Universe came into being by the Big Bang of the Sacred Word, Guru Nanak insists, to understand what it means to be religious focus should be imbibing the sound of the *Shabda* that has intrinsic power to put the Body, Mind, and Soul in perfect alignment, and by awakening utmost Humility creating wholesome receptivity to benefit the divine message that it embodies. Combining such an attitude with selfless service as dedicated labour of love to God, the seeker makes steady progress on the Path of



Righteousness to make his heart a suitable receptacle to receive Divine Grace. However, it is an uphill task to convince the mind that is used to self-created confusion and maverick machinations for one-upmanship that approach

to such an awesome Divinity could be as easy as that—hence the relapse into Material World in which chasing evanescent joys wastes priceless human life without evoking any regret in the human loser 🍃





4



WHAT IS ‘NAAM’?

‘NAAM’ is a Persian [Iranian] word—its synonym in Arabic is ‘*Kunyat*’—, which has diverse connotations: Name, Title, Designation, Character, Honour, Fame, Dignity, Breed, Pedigree, Kind, and Memorial. Its English synonym is “Name”, one of the commonest terms for divine word, the creative Power of God. In Mysticism, Name frequently occurs in such phrases and expressions as Name of God, Name of life, Name of the Father, and Name of the Lord. In Judaism, where it is often called the Holy Name (*Shem Kodsho*), it has been used from the earliest period right through to modern times. It is present throughout both Jewish and Christian biblical literature, and is commonly encountered in early-Christian writings. Sufi and Indian mystics have also used the term extensively.

Naam has been commonly used by mystics throughout India as a name for the creative

Power of God, just as the Name of God has been used as an expression in many languages for the same Power, dating as far back as records can be traced. Also called *Shabda* [Word, Sound], it is the divine or unstruck Music which resounds within every human being as the dynamic and ever-active energy and creative Power of the supreme Creator, Lord God.

A name implies a distinction between the named and the One who uses the name. The mystic Name [*Naam*] is God’s first emanation. When He is ONE, and all there is, there is no place for names. When the Name is emanated, then there are two; hence, there is place for a name, so to speak. A name is also, as we all know from everyday usage and experience, by which something or someone is known and addressed. It is, indeed, the starting point of a relationship. Likewise the mystic Name is that by which God



can be known, the means by which the soul can develop a personal relationship with Him. Moreover, a name is intended to capture the essence of the thing named, and since the creative Power is formed of God's primal essence, it is called His Name.

However, in Himself [as in *Sunn Samadhi* (Imperturbably Self-Absorption)], God has no need of a humanly given name.

The sanctified word "Name" thus connotes the Creative Word of Lord God that is known by many other names too.

Naam Dhun, *Naam Dhun Bani* [Literally, Sound [*Bani*] of the Melody [*Dhun*] of the Name [*Naam*]; the music of the mystic Name of God; a name for His Creative Power highlighting its audible aspect:

All the comforts of emancipation
Dwell in the Name's and *Gurbani's*
meditation

So I do enshrine the true Name within my mind
Without the Name O Nanak,
One is released not
So swim thou across, aboard the
Name's true boat

[SGGS, Page 1013]



HE REMAINS ALWAYS ONE

The word "Name" is also found in such other expressions as *Naam Ras* [Elixir of the Name], *Amrit Naam* [Immortal Name], *Nij Naam* [Inherent Name], *Nihakshar Naam* [Unwritten Name], *Sat Naam* [True Name], and so on. God's creative Power is known as *Naam* or the Name of God because it is through His Name that He can be known. God in His ultimate essence is ONE, with no division whatsoever. Where there is no division or differentiation, there can be no names, for there is no other to be called by a name when ALL is ONE. The creative Current of God is called His Name, because it represents the first creative division as the One sets out to become Multiplicity of the creation. Yet the primal Oneness of God is never tainted [*Niranjan*].

He remains always ONE. This is one of the essential paradoxes of Mysticism, which can be resolved only by direct mystical experience of God. This uniqueness sets Spirituality apart in a special class from Science which, though a valid and an indispensable way of apprehending the phenomenal world, is limited to the understanding of Products and Processes that can be observed by the senses [Mind], are measurable by instruments, put to experiment in the laboratory, and theorised/hypothesised by the intellect.

Existence of God cannot be proved as some ego-blinded 'scientists' like Stephen Hawking

vainly insisted and arrogantly pronounced unsavoury opinions as maverick assertions of utter ignorance. The reason is that there is a world of difference between Revelation [Direct Perception] and Ratiocinative Cerebration [Inference]. Revelation results from Mysticism [Full-Brain Experience]. Inference is the product of Logic [Left-Brain Workout]. I have identified that there are four Human Faculties by using which we apprehend the Phenomenal and Noumenal Worlds: Reason, Emotion, Imagination, and Intuition.

Reason thinks; using Logic as its major tool. Emotion perceives by the sense of touch; using feeling as its primary tool. Emotion is one of the three groups of phenomena of the mind—feeling, distinguished from cognition and will. Imagination flies; using fancy as its vehicle. Intuition is the power of the mind by which it immediately perceives the truth of things without reasoning or analysis or feeling. To my knowledge and experience, Intuition is an invaluable offspring of Emotion and Reason with their wedlock in Imagination. A lower form of Intuition is, however, the daughter of Information—the more you have it the stronger is the Intuition and the better it works.

The word ‘Mind’ has been used variously by different writers, at different times—and yet eludes a precise definition. In modern times, it refers to the human mental ‘apparatus’, including thought, intellect, memory, emotion, and so on. In

mystic thought, this is really the individual mind which, using modern terminology, some mystics describe as a part of the universal mind or negative power. For me, Mind can be distinguished from Brain, naming collectively from what we know from experience to be the Human Computer. Brain is biological and is the hardware of the Human Computer. Mind is socio-cultural artefact and is the Software of the Human Computer. In other words, you are born with your Brain, but acquire a Mind as you grow up in a given Society. I have identified three constituents that are active, coactive, interactive, and proactive in the unending process as: Heredity, Environment, and Circumstance which I call, respectively: the seed, the soil, and the tilling.

The terminology is perhaps confusing, since ‘mind’ used in the context of the universal mind or negative power is quite different from ‘Mind’ used for the primal creative emanation of God. The origin of ‘Mind’, meaning the creative Power, is by analogy with the human mind. Just as all human creative activity proceeds or emanates from mind or thought, so too can it be said that the cosmic creation is the expression or projection of the Mind of God, a creative force also called, as noted before, The Word or *The Shabda* whose most comprehensive psycho-spiritual package is the ‘NAAM’.

I started taking serious interest in the study of World Religions 30 years ago. I have since done two doctorates on *Gurbani* and the *Golden*



Temple. Equipped thus the deeper I go into the ramifications of the esoteric subject the surer I feel that it would require a lifetime exclusively devoted to this study to make a reasonable, if cursory, sense of Religion. If that be the case, then, how could Stephen Hawking even in the wildest of his imagination figure out what Religion is all about without ever caring to find out facts about it from firsthand study? Since the faculty of Intellect with its tool of Reason are what we explore the realm of Science with [Left-Brain Function], it is *unscientific* to pronounce a judgement on something you have not even suspected that it exists. Therefore, Hawking's perfunctory pronouncements on God and Religion are expressions of his frustration in Scientific Adventure!

NAAM is the Lord Himself in the form of primal or creative Power. It is His means by which He projects Himself as His creation. It is Love [Universal-Timeless Script-Free Language], Truth [His Primal Attribute], Consciousness [His Sleep-Free Wakefulness], and Bliss [His Unchanging State of Mind]. Known to, and experienced by human beings within themselves, in the form of Sound and Light, *Naam* has, therefore, come to be known as the *Shabda* [Sound] or Sound Current [*Shabda Dhaara*]. Those who know it from personal experience [not hearsay or merely reading of books] are drawn irresistibly to it.

NAAM is and behind all things and is the motion and life of a puppet that are given to it by

unseen strings [*sagal paroyi apne soot*]. Lord God, His Name and the soul are all of one essence because he is the Cause, Material, Method, and Creator. This is how *Naam* creates all things, and is the life and light of creatures. Taking the form of a true Guru, *Naam* reconnects *Jeevas* [incarnate souls] to itself through initiation, and takes them back to *The Source*, Lord God. When it is withdrawn from created realms, those realms cease to exist. This is Dissolution [*Pralaya*].

The Gurus have also described divine Name or the creative Word as a jewel:

God's Name is the emerald, jewel, and ruby
[SGGS, Page 880]



The praise of the Lord's Name
Is an invaluable treasure
Which God has deposited with the Saint
He who accepts the *Guru's* Word as
true and abiding
Taking it out this treasure, the *Guru* places it
before him
[SGGS, Page 1326]



NAAM is the unique generator of all existence, the sole means of salvation, and the one essence of all. It is One with God—*The Source*—from which the highest Saints [literally, those who

have arrived/reached] emanate. As a consequence, saints, *Sadhus*, sages, seekers, and philosophers of all places and times have given the sacred appellation “*Naam*” various names; and as there are hundreds of languages in the world, the humanly given names of NAAM are far too many. In the quote given below Guru Nanak Dev is clearly telling that he deems himself to be the dust of the feet of those who had given God all these names because in his estimation each one of them is a sanctified epithet worthy of worship transcending religious affiliations and self-imposed unfortunate restrictions. That’s why and how the Guru has eventually simplified the matter to an axiomatic saying:

Siru Nanak lokaan paav hai
Balihari jaaon jete tere naav hain
 Nanak, I place my head at the people’s feet
 I am a sacrifice for all Thy Holy Names



NAAM is *Shabda* of the *Gurus*; the *Logos* of the ancient Greeks; the Word, Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost and the Comforter of the New Testament; *Anaahad Bani* of the Sikhs; the *Kalaam*, *Kun*, *Baang-i-Aasmaani*, *Nida-i-Sultani*, *al-Isim al-A’zam*, and so forth, of the Sufis; the Silent Whisper, the Silent Music and Sonorous Sound of John of the Cross;

the *Naad*, *Naam*, *Raam Naam*, *Raam Dhun*, and so forth of the Hindus; and so on.

Other connotations of NAAM are dynamic creative principle; Reality; God; the Name; mystical word or for *Moola* [slang for money] to recite or meditate upon. There are also in common use such expressions as: *Naam-Japnal Naam Laina* [to recite or repeat the Name]; *Naam-Abhyaas* [Meditation upon the Name]. Since vernacular word for Truth is central to *Gurbani* pioneered for the Sikh Faith by Guru Nanak Dev it should be helpful to have a look at it. Written in *Gurmukhi* in three different ways, though each variant has the same pronunciation, it has different meanings: *Sat*, *Sat(u)*, and *Sat(i)*. the first word means ‘seven’; the second stands for moral character/conduct; and the third denotes that which is unchanging [beyond the ken and influence of Space and Time]—Truth which is the Primal Attribute of God, connoting that He exists *actually*, *not* as a figment of imagination, but as *Reality*.

Guru Nanak declares this crucial fact in the *Mool Mantra* with characteristic probity and punch: *Adi sach; Jugadi sach; Hai bhi sach; Nanak, ho si bhi sach*. Here, his Revelation marks a radical departure from the averments found in the books of other World Religions. Unlike the centuries-old concept of Time as three-segment duration, the Guru adds a fourth



one. God [as Real Being] was there when nothing else existed [*Adi Sach*] before Time had started to run its course [*Jugadi Sach* or Past] because it is He who created Time in the first place; He is still there [*Hai Bhi Sach*] in the Present; and will be there in the Future too [*Ho Si Bhi Sach*].

Mystics say that Creative sound is God Himself in dynamic action. God is the centre of all existence. He is the One—at rest, motionless, undifferentiated, silent, pure; above all, WHOLE. His Act of Creation is really an action or projection or emanation. He makes waves within Himself and the primary wave or motion from which is derived, and by which it is actively sustained is His Sound whose equivalent in the created world is His Word, His Name—indeed, known by many other appellations. In origin, this is *Anaahad Nada*, Unstruck Melody that has unending soulful reverberations (*Dhun*) in Cosmic Space.

In this light, Guru Nanak Dev's proclamation assumes a very different meaning: *Shabda guru surt dhun chela...*

The Word [not a human *Guru*] is the Spiritual Preceptor with which, in unbroken chant, Consciousness [*Surt*] conjoins via the *Dhun* to resume its original state of Unstruck Melody. This is an extremely arduous workout i.e. Name-chanting that Guru Nanak declares to be far from being easy [*Aakhan Aukha Saacha Naon*]. Quite appropriately, therefore, it has been called *Chautha Pad* [the Fourth State] above and

beyond the three states of wakefulness, dreams, and deep sleep. It is hard to acquire because its precedent requirement is of self-abnegation, unconditional love, and renunciation through the thick and thin of workaday existence. It thus becomes the launching pad for a flight into the realm of *The Source* [*Parma Pad*]: Lord God, The Maker of the Unstruck Melody.

Maya permeates the whole world
Under the spell of *Maya*, man acts to his
Ego's diktat, and loses honour
But one who becomes *Guru*-Guided
Acquires the *Chautha Pad*, which is beyond the
influence of *Maya*
He attains spiritual tranquillity through the
Lord's Name
[SGGS, Page 604]



Mirage seen in the desert is nothing but rising hot air, which gives the seer an illusion of water. When we see mirage as a river of water, we do not perceive the rising hot air. However, the moment we perceive the mirage to be the rising hot air, we do not see water in the mirage anymore! In other words, it is only when the division between the seer and what is seen is given up that we see the two as of one substance, leading to the realisation that there is only One Truth, all else is illusion - *Mithiya*!

While in the dreaming state, the dream appears to be *true* to the dreamer. However, on waking he realises that it was just a passing fancy! On account of man's conditioned consciousness, the mirage-like phenomenal world of names and forms appears to be the *living reality*. Each person experiences within himself whatever his desires and fears have produced in his mind. In reality, this world of appearances is nothing but a long dream outstretched into the so-called state of wakefulness. It appears to be real and permanent because delusion as a state of mind persists.

The frequency with which Indian mystics have spoken of NAAM provides an insight into the degree of importance they attach to it. Kabir says that there are countless names of God, but none among them are His "Primal Name":

There are millions of names in the world
But not one among them leads to salvation
Few are aware of the Primal Name
For it is secret repetition, known only to
a rare One



Guru Nanak observes that without contact with Lord's Name, the soul wanders in the vast and deep darkness of ignorance:

Without God's Name, the
thoughtless fools
Stray in superstition, and are ruined
They, whose minds contain not God's true
Name and devotion
Bewail loudly in the end
Nanak utters a truth: through the true *Gurbani*
The since-long separated souls unite
with the Lord



Guru Nanak also uses the terms *Gupt(i) Bani*, *Gupt(i) Naam*, which mean hidden or secret [*Gupt*, *Gupti*] Sound [*Bani*] or Name [*Naam*]; the hidden or unmanifest Word; an expression used for the Creative Power or Sound Current, which the word *Gurbani* below connotes:

The man, unto whom the unmanifest
Gurbani
Becomes manifest, comes to know the true
Lord, O Nanak



SHABDA AND SHABAD

SHABDA, in its mystic meaning, is the Word of God, the Creative Word as the divine Sound, the sound current, the transcendent Melody, the



creative Power, the source of all creation. It is also found in such expressions as *anaahat Shabda* and *anhad Shabda*. In Hindi and Punjabi, a *shabad* is also a song, a *hymn* [I prefer this English word for *shabad*] a religious or spiritual poem. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the hymns are popularly called *shabads*, and sung to the accompaniment of instruments in which case such devotional performance by *Ragis* [baptised hymn-singers] is named *Shabad Kirtan*. I am using two spellings of the word to distinguish the connotation that I intend each to convey clearly. *Shabda* is what translates into WORD [Word] in English. *Shabad* connotes a HYMN [hymn] which is sung in *Kirtan*.

The *Shabda* is the active and creative Power of God. Every particle of the creation is in motion, perpetually vibrating. Without this motion, it could never exist—by this token, Life is, indeed, Motion. As physicists delve deeper into Matter, they have discovered that the smaller the ‘particle’, the faster it appears to vibrate. Even an apparently inert stone moves and changes constantly within itself because of this vibration. The speed of this vibration is exceptionally rapid. No wonder *Gurbani* points to rudimentary life in stone too. In terms of consciousness we may say that stone has it bordering on the zero as against plants that may have up to 25 per cent. Before the advent of the 20th century, Science did not acknowledge the vitality of trees and plants. Then, on May 10,

1901, Jagdish Chandra Bose proved that plants are like any other life-form. Bose demonstrated that plants have a definite life cycle, a reproductive system, and are *aware* of their surroundings. The demonstration took place in the Royal Society in London, England. Bose used his invention to introduce the world of plants to the humans. His invention, the Crescograph, showed how plants move. Further up the scale of evolution we have Animals who may have consciousness up to 50 per cent.

According to the Theory of Evolution, atop the ladder are the *Homo sapiens* [Man, the Wise] whose consciousness may touch the 75 per cent mark. In other words, man is the only species that has got life, sentience as well as consciousness. He had the additional massive advantage that he obtained the biped posture so that his hands were free to carry out the commands of his relatively much bigger brain to develop human creativity to such marvellous forms as we see today. It took him eight million years to evolve to present form from his animal ancestors.

Scientists acknowledge that they have no idea what keeps the physical creation in this state of perpetual motion. The Power by which creation is continually sustained and maintained in the existence is unknown to Science. However, Mystics say that this Power is the *Shabda*, the primal Vibration of God that projects the creation and keeps it in existence.

The physical ears experience the vibration of only a tiny, scaled-down part of the motion—the vibration of air molecules at the physical level. The physical eyes perceive the electromagnetic vibrations known as light. Similarly, other senses only perceive very narrow windows into the interactions of material substance. But the source of all this vibration is not perceived with the physical senses.

However, the Mind and Soul, when concentrated and awakened inside, possess the faculty to hear the primal vibration. This is the divine sound, the true cosmic Music. The inner faculties [notably, one of hearing] also see this celestial Power as Light. Hence, glimpse of Lord God is *Sarwan Darshan*—seeing via Sound—by invoking the illimitable Power of the *Shabda*.

A word about *Bani* should be in order here. *Bani*, literally, means sound, voice, utterance, speech; verses, teachings, sayings, especially sacred books, teachings or sayings, particularly of the Saints, in poetic or musical form, whether oral or written. From the Sanskrit *Vani* [sound, voice, music, speech, language, words]; mystically, it is the divine Sound, Voice or Word, where it is understood to mean the *Anaahad Bani* [unstruck Sound], the Divine Creative Power. The term is prevalent throughout the writings of Indian mystics, either on its own or in conjunction with such epithets as *Anaahad* [unstruck], *Amrit* [immortal], and *Sachchi* [true]:

Bani [*Gurbani*, the Guru's Word or Utterance]

Has become renowned

In all the Four Yugas

And it preaches nothing but Truth



Omkar, *Oankar*, and *Onkar* are widely believed in religious parlance to be the sound of Om. In one or the other preferred form it is used synonymously with Om in the *Upanishads* and by various yogic paths to represent the absolute Brahman. Om is also the creative Sound which emanates from Brahman. It is also a name given by a number of Indian Saints to the ruler of the second spiritual realm, which they have equated with Brahman, and is regarded as the most sacred word of the Vedas, and hence commonly used by yogis as a *Mantra* (Incantation).

We can add the suffix *Kar* to any Sanskrit syllable in order to give it a name, conferring the meaning, 'the sound of' or 'the syllable of'. Because it is a name, *Omkar* can also be the name of a deity. *Omkar* or Om, however, is much more than a symbol or an external sound. It is an emanation of the power of *Omkar*, the Lord of *Trikuti*, the region of the universal mind and the second spiritual region according to a number of Indian mystics. It is a Power whose sound can



actually be heard when the attention is turned within and rises to that level. Hence Kabir writes:

Trikuti is the source of knowledge
Where thunder sound resounds like
a big drum
And the light of the red glows brightly
There you will find the four-petalled lotus
From which the ceaseless sound of
Omkar arises



IN GURU HAR RAI'S HANDWRITING

In mid-2010, for the first time, astronomers at the University of Sheffield managed to record the vibrations (eerie musical harmonies) produced by the magnetic field in the outer atmosphere of Sun. Huge magnetic loops known as coronal loops were observed coiling away from the outer layer of the Sun's atmosphere, which behave like sound waves travelling through a wind instrument such as strings on a musical instrument vibrate. Since sound cannot travel through the near-vacuum of space, scientists cannot record the sounds produced in the Sun's atmosphere directly. So the scientists at the

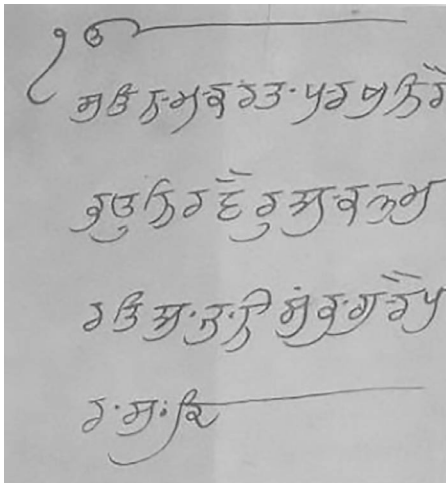
University of Sheffield used the satellite images of giant magnetic loops spread over thousands of miles to recreate the sound by turning the visible vibrations into noises and speeding up their frequencies to make them audible to the human ear. The noise from such a large and powerful source as Sun sounded as a sort of music because it has harmonics.

However, in the light of the fact that Guru Nanak Dev freely used Arabic and Persian words in his *Bani*, the suffix 'Kar' that he has deployed in the coinage 'Oankar' is not of Sanskrit origin; it is Persian. It means work, labour, action, service, business, duty, affair, practice, skill, profession, trade, and 'doer'. Quite clearly the Guru used the suffix in this connotation because he was putting forth a revolutionary view that encompassed the three powers of Creation, Protection, and Destruction, all compacted and embodied in the word "Oankar". This was his unique way of defining the awesome, inviolable Multi-pronged Power of the Numeral "1" which he has prefixed to this Name. To my study, experience, and knowledge, I have not come across any other Prophet, Saint, or Saviour who could match Guru Nanak's civility of discourse and pious assertion without provoking debate or dissent.

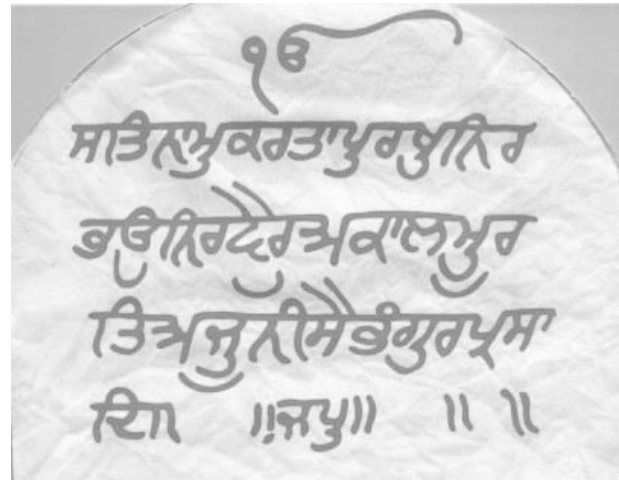
It is well known that these three powers had since ancient times been assigned to the three

principal deities: Brahma [Creator], Vishnu [Protector-Provider-Communicator], and Shiva [Destroyer] and continue to be so believed in the triune concept of God in Hinduism. The word 'Oankar' is a modified version of the original 'Omkar' because the use of the first letter of the Gurmukhi script 'Oorha', ੳ has been opened up to symbolise the suffix 'Kar' as in the world-famous symbol of *Ik Oankar*: ੴ.

However, it comes alive in the magnificent handwriting of the various Masters of the Sikh Faith with soul-stirring aesthetic charm:



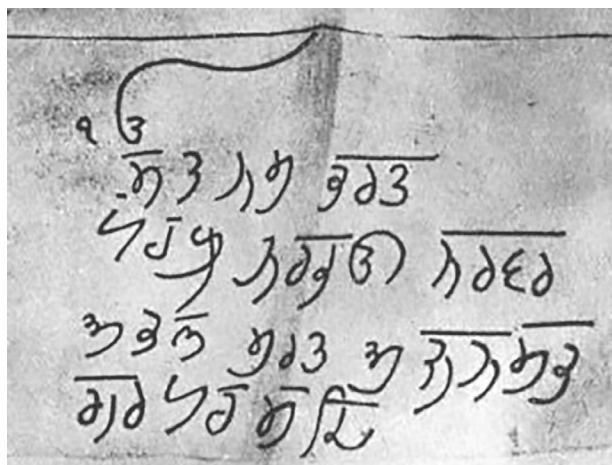
Mool Mantra in Guru Har Gobind's Handwriting



Mool Mantra in Guru Arjan Dev's Handwriting



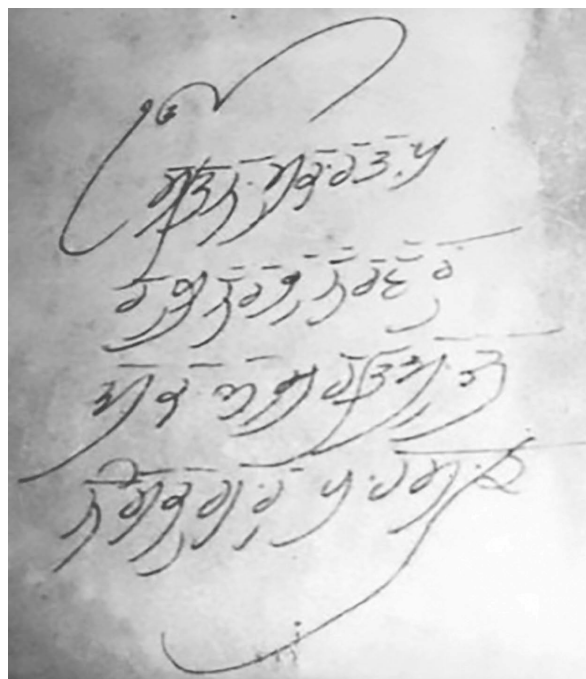
Mool Mantra in Guru Gobind Singh's Handwriting



Mool Mantra in Guru Har Gobind's Handwriting



Mool Mantra in Guru Tegh Bahadar's Handwriting



Mool Mantra in Guru Gobind Singh's Handwriting

*

See how each Guru has inscribed the Numeral “1” with a generous space between it and the “Oorha” that he has written with a joyous flourish to suggest Guru Nanak Dev’s Bani as Revelation which is Creative Mysticism, not rehashing of the existing religions’ doctrines. I cannot help feel that what he has so spontaneously done contains the essence of entire *Gurbani* in it: God is ONE; He creates-preserves-destroys in gay abandon [*Oankar*]*—*and yet has the power to remain aloof from the creation [Numeral “1”].

I had written and published two decades ago that *Om* [ॐ] is a *Mantra* for all persons, all places, and all seasons. It is a single-syllable master-word compounded of three primary sounds: ‘a’ and ‘u’ (vowels) and ‘m’ (consonant), which are present in all the languages of the world. The two vowels when uttered together are melded into a single that sounds as ‘o’, and the word is written as ‘Om’. When it is uttered aloud (i.e. with full-throated acceleration) so that the sound begins to issue from the base of the throat, it creates an acoustic vortex—a voice-winged whirlwind—soon after the pouted lips are closed at the drop of ‘m’. The vacuum created by the vortex sucks in energy from outside until it meets the inside energy to restore the original state of rest: Active Silence. When that subtle point of no-motion is touched, the subject experiences a lightning thrill of self-renewal.

Having tried the exercise myself, independent of liturgical prescriptions, I am convinced that *Om* is, indeed, the *Logos*—the Word of God-incarnate, which operates as the active principle living in and determining the world. The word becomes a palpable evidence of God’s omnipresence when activated by deep personal love. With the letter ‘l’ added, the Word becomes World, the most beautiful manifestation of Divinity: eternally beautiful, infinitely bountiful 🌿

Brahma was created by the One Lord
That *Brahma* cherished the One Lord
in the mind

From the One Lord have emanated the
mountains and ages

It is the One Lord who created the *Vedas*
It is through the One Lord that the world is saved
It is through the One Lord

That those who are God-oriented get emancipated
Hearken thou the account of the
imperishable Lord
Worthy of obeisance
The Lord Eternal is the essence of the three worlds



Vadaa Sahib oocha thaao
Oochay upar oocha naao
Evad oocha hovai koay
Tis oochai kao jaanai soay
Jeivad aap jaanai aap aap
Nanak nadree karmee daat

Great is the Master, High is His Celestial Home
Highest of the High, above all, is His Name
Only one as High as Lord God and as Great
Could know His Lofty and Exalted State
Only He Himself is that Great. Him He
Himself knows

O Nanak, by His Glance of Grace, He His
Blessings bestows

[Japuji, Pauri-24: Lines 11-16]





5



NANAK KAI GHAR KEWAL NAAM



ਏਹੁ ਅਹੇਰਾ ਕੀਨੇ ਦਾਨੁ
Ehu ahera keeno daan
ਨਾਨਕ ਕੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮੁ

Nanak kai ghar kewal Naam
[Raag Bhairao Mahalla 5, SGGS, Page 1136]
Lord God has to humanity given this gift
Nanak's home glows with only Name in it



When I told him that I was writing a book on Guru Nanak Dev, my friend Professor HS Virk who is well versed in *Gurbani* and has sound knowledge and experience of Science, readily suggested that I use the title: *Nanak kai ghar kewal Naam*. His desire that I work on the subject from various angles prodded me to research it

and eventually dilate upon the subject in a manner which, to my knowledge and belief, has never been done before. I must confess that this exercise has given me a new insight into the Significance, Magnificence, and Munificence of “NAAM” that the Prophet of the Sikh Faith has used exhaustively to establish that the Holy Name is all-encompassing, perennially fresh, generic appellation for Lord God. “NAAM” emerges to be the key aspect of his Revelation. What follows is the result of my month-long meditative study and understanding of the subject.

The Significance, Magnificence, and Munificence of NAAM, Lord God's Holy Name, have been dilated upon in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, ad infinitum*, by all those holy personages whose *Bani* is enshrined in the Sikh Bible. However, I have picked up three *Pauris* from three different Ashtapadis of Guru Arjan Dev's *Sukhmani Sahib*

to underscore the crucial points that I am attempting to make. The Fifth Master has centred exclusive focus on NAAM as Be-All and End-All of Guru Nanak's Revelation which his Nine Successors have reverently followed. All of them have admirably explicated by their own mystical experiences *vis-à-vis* the changing socio-cultural and political conditions of India and how they affected the mindset of the people, notably, Muslims and Hindus—the rulers and the ruled—who were witness to the Sikh Faith's Prophet's Silent Revolution in the midst of mass-scale degradation of religions and depravement of civilisations.

I have studiously rendered the Punjabi originals into poetic rendering in English, exercising utmost care not to deviate from the theme or cloud the central idea even while taking some liberty which, in parlance of literature, is called "Poetic Licence". I am hoping that the readers will find this material helpful in appreciating my point of view besides receiving an illuminating glimpse of *Gurbani*.

ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮਃ ੫ ॥ ਸਲੋਕੁ॥
 ਸਿਮਰਉ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਉ ॥
 ਕਲਿ ਕਲੇਸ ਤਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਮਿਟਾਵਉ ॥
 ਸਿਮਰਉ ਜਾਸੁ ਬਿਸੁੰਭਰ ਏਕੈ ॥
 ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਅਗਨਤ ਅਨੇਕੈ ॥

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸੁਧਾਖਰ ॥
 ਕੀਨੇ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਇਕ ਆਖਰ ॥
 ਕਿਨਕਾ ਏਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਜੀਅ ਬਸਾਵੈ ॥
 ਤਾ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਗਨੀ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥
 ਕਾਖੀ ਏਕੈ ਦਰਸ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਉਨ ਸੰਗਿ ਮੇਹਿ ਉਧਾਰੇ ॥੧॥

SUKHMANI SAHIB: First Ashtapadi; Pauri-1

By repeated remembrance of the Lord,
 find tranquillity
 Worry and anxiety shall be dispelled
 from your body
 Remember Him in praise;
 He pervades the Universe
 His Name is chanted variously by
 devotees countless
 Vedas, Puranas and Smritis—all of
 them are sanctified
 When to their contents Lord's Holy
 Name is applied
 He who has lodged Him in his soul
 even a wee bit
 O what glory possesses he; it is hard to
 describe it
 Those who yearn only for a fleeting
 glimpse of Thine
 Nanak: I cannot describe their glory
 with power mine



SUKHMANI SAHIB:

Second Ashtapadi; Pauri-1

ਜਹ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਮੀਤ ਨ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਮਨ ਊਹਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਹਾਈ ॥
ਜਹ ਮਹਾ ਭਇਆਨ ਦੂਤ ਜਮ ਦਲੈ ॥
ਤਹ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਚਲੈ ॥
ਜਹ ਮੁਸਕਲ ਹੋਵੈ ਅਤਿ ਭਾਰੀ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਖਿਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਉਧਾਰੀ ॥
ਅਨਿਕ ਪੁਨਹਚਰਨ ਕਰਤ ਨਹੀ ਤਰੈ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਕੋਟਿ ਪਾਪ ਪਰਹਰੈ ॥
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥੧॥

Where mother, father, children, friends nor
siblings are by your side

There with you, O my mind, only the
Holy Name shall abide

Where Death's horrible Messenger threatens
to crush you

Only the Lord God's Holy Name shall
accompany you

Where there are many obstacles of enormous
mass

There the Lord's Name alone shall ferry you
across

Even by countless good deeds you could not
be saved

Your myriad sins would by Lord's
Name be removed

O my mind, chant *Naam* by the Guru's grace
Nanak: Earn joys aplenty and proceed apace



SUKHMANI SAHIB: Sixteenth

Ashtapadi; Pauri-5

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬੈਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸੁਨਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਆਗਾਸ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਸਭ ਭਵਨ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਉਧਰੇ ਸੁਨਿ ਸੁਵਨ ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਆਪਨੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਾਏ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਮਹਿ ਸੇ ਜਨੁ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਏ ॥੫॥

The *Naam* is the Support of all creatures
as get reported

By the *Naam* are the earth and solar systems
supported

By the *Naam*'s support Smritis, Vedas, and
Puranas continue to exist

By the *Naam*'s support knowledge,
meditation, and listening persist

The skies and the nether worlds are
propped up by *Naam*

The *Naam*, indeed, supports many a
world and realm

The *Naam* supports towns and regions
of the universe

One invokes *Naam* by listening and
gets ferried across

By *Naam*'s grace God draws the devotee to
His station

Nanak, reaching the fourth state, they
attain salvation



NAAM-recitation or Divine-invocation is not confined to ceaseless parroting; nor is it the focusing of attention on the letters of a word or meditating on an icon or idol. Much to the contrary, when consciousness attains to a state of mind in which no thought at all stirs it, it melts into formlessness. The meaning of *Naam*-recitation is Lord God's form with attributes [*Sarguna Saroop*] that is worshipped with profoundest longing for communion, most intense love, deepest devotion, and unwavering resoluteness. To uplift the mind to such high level of gumption or exalted spiritual state, it has to transform into liquefied psychic condition soaked in divinity. Guru Nanak describes this esoteric state thus:

*Nadri karei te simriya jaaye
Aatma dravei rahai liv laaye
Aatma Parmatma eko karai
Antar kee dubidh antara marei*

God-remembrance is when He casts
His grace's glance
Then the liquefied soul remains in ceaseless
absorption
Soul and the Lord thence meld into One
Divine Essence
With all the (doubts) and inner duality lying
dead within



*Gurmukhi naamu dhiaayai mann
mandaru bheejai*

God-oriented souls meditate on the Holy
Name, with mind-temple soaked in divinity



Singing paeans as prescribed in hymns [*Shabda Kirtan*] to the Glory of God helps in soaking the mind with the divine shower of grace. Therefore, without being soaked in *Naam-Rasa* reading of *Gurbani* along with the performance of many rituals is an exercise in futility.

To reach such a desirable state of mind, though an uphill task, the *Guru* furnishes further guidance beginning with a primary prerequisite. This is immaculate purity of mind that can be achieved only by *Naam*-meditation. Without this absolute purity the Realm of Spirituality cannot be accessed, much less entered. For example, every professional wrestler knows that to acquire physical strength and stamina, different bodily exercises—without which no progress can ever be made—must be regularly done to a stringent regimen for several years.

As wrestling was my sport in school and college, I am tempted to quote the grand example of Ghulam Muhammad. Better known as “The Great Gama” he was a wrestler and strongman born in 1880 in British India. He was most famous



for long and successful wrestling career as he remained undefeated for more than 50 years, but his self-devised, unusual training methods and feats of strength that he used to perform also played a role in his matchless prowess. Gama used to do five thousand squats and three thousand push-ups every day, and his daily diet included 10 litres of milk, six *desi* chickens, and a pound and a half of crushed almond paste made into a tonic drink. He lifted a stone weighing 1200 kilogrammes (2645 pounds) up to his chest and dropped it down after carrying it for a while. It was 2.5 feet in height and it is still on display at Baroda Museum in Gujarat, India.

It should be easy to understand that rather than *lifting* as in Gama's case it is *dropping*, the enormous dead load of Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride. This is a Herculean feat far more challenging, which is why there are so few among seven billion peoples of the world who have successfully wrestled with these Five Foes lodged within the mind to emerge as champions in the World of Spirit. Guru Nanak underscores the significance of such psycho-spiritual workouts in simple terms as:

Suchi hovai taan sachu paayai
Only Purity begets Probity



SIGNIFICANCE OF "NAAM"

Apart from dilating upon the definition of 'NAAM' because it is central to *Gurbani* based on Revelation I have tried to classify its Timeless-Universal validity and veracity in terms of its Significance, Magnificence, and Munificence. Guru Nanak Dev to set all speculations and prejudices to rest proclaimed the *Mool Mantra* its significance by placing 'NAAM' immediately after stating that 'Truth' is the Primal attribute of 'Ik Oankar'. The *Guru*, in my considered opinion, the greatest prophet of the world, has used the word for two reasons: (i) If Oankar is ONE, without a second, and He actually exists [Truth], the seeker would be curious to know Him by His other traits that are known to peoples of the world from common everyday experience so that they could address Him [albeit as Formless Lord] with reference to one or more of them; (ii) He is obliquely suggesting that the word 'Naam' would perform a much deeper, wider, and higher—and more ubiquitous, function than a mere appellation of the Creator. Therefore, the word 'Naam' here says—having said that God is One and He performs the three roles of the Creator, Provider, and Destroyer Himself besides His status being True 'Being' [not a figment of imagination or a philosophical concept or a scientific hypothesis or a mythological deity or a poetic fancy]—let us name His other Unique Attributes.

These as you can see are spelled out with a pithy punch resolving every contradiction that came on the way. For example, when we say ‘Akal’ [Beyond the ken of Time] the seeker would wonder how to identify himself with Him; so the *Guru* hastens to use the word ‘Moorat’. But then would suggest an image or an idol, to resolve which he stresses the fact that he is ‘Ajooni’. This word again raises a question if He is not born the way we humans are born “How did He come into being, in the first place?” This conundrum is resolved by the term “*Saibhang*”. The last phrase “*Gur-Parsad*” is commonly interpreted as “by the Grace of the *Guru* He could be known”. I think this contradicts everything that the *Guru* has so magnificently communicated in his entire *Bani*—nobody can reckon his magnificence, grandeur, glory, and countless other traits because only exalted consciousness can access that realm but the paradox is that when the blessed seeker is at that point of divine encounter his soul immediately gets merged in God’s Divine Essence or Light.



In Pauri-Four of Japji, *Guru Nanak* states the Timeless-Universal import of ‘Naam’ when he commends that he who desires to have a glimpse of God’s court and win over His heart he ought to reflect on the Glory of Name in the

ambrosial hour religiously. He presents another point that sets his *Gurbani* apart from the tenets of World Religions. He says while good deeds can get you a better vesture on the principle of “As you sow so shall you reap” those aspiring to liberation from the endless cycle of birth, death, rebirth, must await his grace because, unlike in other religions where hard work, meditation and good deeds promise salvation, this is what God bestows on the earnest and persevering devotee by His own sweet Will, which is inscrutable.

PAURI-FOUR

Unchanging is the Sire, True His justice,
 His language love infinite
 We only ask and implore—and so graciously
 He gives it
 What can we offer the Giver for a glimpse
 of His court
 How prayers must be worded to melt
 His heart
 Meditate on the True Name’s glory in the
 ambrosial hours
 Good deeds beget good life, but salvation
 His grace confers
 The Omnipotent is All-Holy, *Nanak* avers



Guru Nanak shows in Pauri-Twenty-four of Japji Sahib without any shadow of doubt the Significance, Magnificence, and Munificence that he has imparted to “NAAM”: He has placed the Holy Name higher than Lord Himself because without it being there in the first place, from the mortals’ impermanent position, a seeker, however earnest, long-drawn and perseverant his meditation may be, the divine cannot be accessed by any means or schemes whatsoever.

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 count are those who’ve vexed to reckon
But no success has ever been achieved by anyone
The more certain we are, the greater He’s 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, 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



Examples that follow are self-explanatory. In any case, I would like the readers to use their minds and discretion to figure out what is what and practise unremittingly to earn invaluable wealth of Naam.

Performed umpteen times in *Gurdwaras* every day across the globe is the Sikh Faith’s Collective Worship of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that concludes with prayer for obtaining the general weal of the entire humanity [*Sarbat da Bhala*] and also entreats *Wah-i-Guru* thus: Pray, have us come by only those of Thy beloved ones meeting whom we would spontaneously remember Thy Name.



ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਸ੍ਰੈਸਟ ਧਰਮੁ
ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ

Sarab dharm maih sreist dharmu
Hari kp naamu japi nirmal karmu
Of all the world religions the best one till date
Is ceaseless chant of *Hari Naam* immaculate

[SGGS, Page 266]



The Guru reiterates the need for keeping alive the Soul-Bride's longing burning in her bosom to achieve the formidable goal of union with Divine-Groom.

Even if I were to become a doe, living in
the forest, grazing on wild vegetation
By Guru's Grace, I would meet my Master, and
be sacrifice unto Him again and again
I am a shop-keeper of the Lord God
His Name is my merchandise and trade
If I were to become a cuckoo, residing on
a mango tree
I would attain equipoise by the Word
through reflection
Yet meet my Master spontaneously
And of His ineffable Form would I have vision
If I were to become a fish, always living in water
I would still remember the Lord who on all
creatures watches over
My Divine Husband dwells on the yonder shore
With open arms I would approach and hug
Him evermore
If I were to become a snake, living beneath ground
In-dwelling *Shabda* would all my fears smite
O Nanak, those soul-brides are happy, safe
and sound
Whose light has commingled with Divine Light
[SGGS, Page 157]



*Har sabhna ka hai khasmu so bhagat
jan chiti kari*

God is the Divine Husband of one and all
Remember Him, and be at His beck 'n' call

[SGGS, Page 849]



ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ਜੀਉ

*Eko Naamu Hukmu hai Nanak Satigur
diya bujhaaye jio*

True Lord's instruction has enlightened me
That His Edict-Fiat unfolds His mystery

[SGGS, Page 72]



ਅਵਰੇ ਨ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵਰੇ
*Avaro na jaanaih sabdi gur kai eku naamu
dhiaavahe*

Except *Shabda-Guru* he knows no other
He meditates on the Name of One Lord

[SGGS, Page 923]



MAGNIFICENCE OF “NAAM”

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਇ
*Vaahu vaahu amrit naam hai gurmukhi
paavai koye*

Hail the ambrosial nectar, Lord's Name
That's only by the Guru-oriented obtained
[SGGS, Page 515]



*Meetu saajanu sakha prabhu eku
Naam suaami ka Nanak tek*
Pal, friend and benevolent is the Lord
The Master's Name is Nanak's support
[SGGS, Page 197]



ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਏਕਾ ਜੋਤੀ
Eko naamu eku naraainu tribhawan eka joti
One Name, One Lord
One light in three worlds
[SGGS, Page 992]



ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਰਾਚੈ ਨਾਇ
Gurmukhi hoye su raachai naaye
He who orients consciousness Guru-ward
Gets absorbed in the Name of Lord
[SGGS, Page 1330]



MUNIFICENCE OF “NAAM”

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਜਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਇਹੁ ਅਉਖਧੁ ਜਗਿ ਸਾਰਾ
*Hari ka naamu amrit jalu nirmalu aukhadhu
jagi saara*

The Water of the Hari's Name-Nectar
is the purest
In the world this is the best medicine
among the rest
[SGGS, Page 659]



ਸਬਦੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਸਬਦੇ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ
Sabade naamu dhiaayai sabade sach samaaye
Contemplate the Name with Shabda in trance
You shall thus merge in the Truth's essence
[SGGS, Page 67]



ਇਹੁ ਸਚੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਖਸਮੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਬਖਸੇ ਸੇ ਜਨੁ ਪਾਵਹੇ
This Truth is every soul-bride's Divine Groom
The one receiving his grace gets Him
[SGGS, Page 922]



ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੈਸੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ
Satsagati kaisi jaanyai
How is the Holy Cogregation to be known?

ਜਿਥੈ ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ

Jithe eko naamu vakhaaniye

Chanted there is the Name of Lord who's One

[SGGS, Page 72]



ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਲਇਆ ਜੇਤੀ ਜੇਤਿ ਰਲੇ

Gurmukhi naamu laiyya jotee joti rale

When the Guru-oriented utters the Name
The soul-spark is absorbed in Divine Flame

[SGGS, Page 362]



Aaya hakaara chalanwaara hari ram

naami samaaya

When he received the call to depart
He merged in Lord's Name soul 'n' heart

[SGGS, Page 923]



Khasam visaaraih te kamjaati

Nanak naavei bajhu sanaati

Forgetting the Divine-Groom the Soul-Bride
is ignoble
Bereft of Naam, Nanak, she has the lowliest
status social



While still on the subject I would like to share my views on two crucial words used by the Guru and their strategic placement in the *Mool Mantra*. After stating that God the Creator, as the Primal Person, he introduces the word 'Nirbhau' immediately follows it by 'Nirvair'.

MOOL MANTRA

[THE SEED-WORD]



ੴ

[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



Apart from their psycho-spiritual significance there is a primordial dimension to the two words—Fearlessness and Freedom from Animosity—that heightens the indispensability and interdependence between them. Unless one is completely free from ‘fear’ it is impossible to be free from ‘animosity’. The action to eliminate your adversary springs from the thought that crops in your mind as a result of perception of the other to be your enemy. At play in it is Sigmund Freud’s *libido* [the Life-Instinct] that compels action in the pursuit of self-preservation [by defence or by attack—although as the proverb goes: “Attack is the best form of defence”] in the mortal world this has been in action since time immemorial.

American philosopher-historian Will Durant has stated the case with a punch: “There have been only 268 of the past 3,421 years free of war.” Among the *Homo sapiens* species ‘fear’ has persisted in the human mind since man rose on his two feet from the awkward, self-limiting posture of a quadruped. It is in our DNA with millions of years of reinforcement provided by the inhospitable natural environment in which man had appeared on Planet Earth. Its classic modern example is Donald Trump, President of USA, the only superpower in the world. Sitting back in the White House in the midst of awesome security he is scared of Kim Jong-un, Marshal of

North Korean Republic, situated at a distance, as the crow flies, of 10,367 kilometres. Why? Because he perceives him to be his potential enemy! Ironically, therefore, it is fear—perceived or real does not matter—that makes him inimical.

Seen in this lurid light, you will marvel at Guru Nanak’s genius at choosing most appropriate words and placing them in the stated order. As he has described God’s attributes he has made it in the very beginning that God is ONE, without a ‘Second’, and used the Numeral ‘1’ to do so. This being the case, it is easy to appreciate that Lord God is the only Being who is absolutely free from FEAR! That is why the Guru tenaciously insists that we humans mortally benumbed by dread should worship only the Fearless One. Guru Arjan Dev declares: Worship the Fearless One to be *free* from all fear!

Guru Nanak set an historic example how these divine traits, notably, ‘fearlessness’ and ‘freedom from animosity’ can be imbibed chanting the Holy Name. He called *Babur* [which means ‘Lion’] *Jabir* [despot/tyrant] publicly.

Concerning this point, Guru Angad Dev’s meeting with Mughal Emperor Humayun forms a very interesting part of his biography showing as it does how Guru Nanak Dev’s legacy of absolute freedom from fear and animosity had travelled to his worthy Nine Successors along

the line of his Spiritual Ministry. It is said that Humayun, son of the founder of Mughal Empire Babur, after his crushing defeat at Kanauj, had come to Khadur to seek the blessings of the Second Master. When Humayun reached there, the Guru was in meditation, and consequently the emperor had to wait. Taking it as an insult he was about to draw out his sword from the scabbard, when the Guru noticed his angered desperation. He politely but firmly remarked that he should have used that same sword against Sher Shah Suri, who was his rival, rather than against a man of God. He reprimanded the royal visitor saying that he had fled from the battlefield like a coward, and now he was posing as a hero in front of an innocent, religious man. Humayun felt ashamed of his conduct and begged forgiveness. The Guru then blessed and assured him that he would get back his kingdom after some time.


Mughal Emperor Akbar had heard favourable accounts of the Third Master Guru Amar Das. Therefore, out of respect for the Guru, he walked barefoot to meet him. He respectfully followed the sacred rule of “*Pehle Pangat Phir Sangat*” [First Meal; then, Meeting] and partook of *Langar* [Free Community Kitchen for all and sundry] sitting on the floor among the commoners. The food that day consisted of coarse bread, rice, and pulses, which

the Mughal Emperor found very delicious as could be noticed from the fact that he had had a hearty meal. All his soldiers followed suit.

Here is an unmatched example of absolute freedom from fear and animosity, for the Sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind, nursed no feelings of revenge despite the fact it was on the orders of the tyrant Emperor Jahangir that Guru Arjan Dev, his father, had been martyred. In a friendly gesture of hospitality, Jahangir invited Guru Har Gobind to accompany him on a hunting expedition. As they rode along, a ferocious tiger suddenly appeared from out of the thick forest. When the Emperor saw that the tiger was about to pounce upon him, he called out to the Guru to save him. Guru Har Gobind, shield and sword in hand, jumped off his horse, ran in front of the Emperor, and, with one stroke of his sword, killed the tiger. After that life-saving incident Jahangir considered him a true friend, and often invited the Guru to go with him on hunting sprees.

This episode demonstrates how fear was not at all tolerated in the House of Guru Nanak. When the bigoted Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb came to the throne, he accused the Seventh Master Guru Har Rai of having helped Dara Shikoh (Aurangzeb’s brother but arch-enemy) and summoned him to his court in Delhi. The Guru sent his eldest son, Baba Ram Rai, with the





strict instructions not to change anything in the *Adi Granth* for fear or favour. Well received by Aurangzeb, he not only satisfactorily responded to all charges but also impressed the Emperor Aurangzeb with his cleverness. As a result, Ram Rai was asked to stay on as a state guest for some period. Subsequently pestered by Qazis and Mullas, one day, Aurangzeb questioned why Guru Nanak had criticized Islam in salok “*Mitti Musalmaan Ki*”? Ram Rai satisfied the royal assembly by saying that the actual writing was “*Mitti Baiemaan Ki*”, not “*Mitti Musalmaan Ki*”. Though Ram Rai had managed on the sly to please Aurangzeb, Guru Har Rai promptly disowned him for the unpardonable sacrilege and forbade all Sikhs from associating with him. Subsequently, the Guru declared his youngest son Har Krishan as his successor [Eighth Master] at Kiratpur Sahib when he was only five years and three months of age.

Guru Nanak has classified humans in simplest terms based on their *Karmas* [deeds]. The above categorisation pertains to the norms of society in

which worth [resulting from spiritual attainments] rather than birth [as in caste system of Hinduism] determines your position. Spiritually also he has defined two categories: *Gurmukh* and *Manmukh*. *Gurmukh* has his consciousness oriented towards the Spiritual Preceptor. *Manmukh* blindly follows the intrigues and machinations of the Mind.

For the one with scientific temper here is a checklist to figure out if he is on the Right Path because mere ritualistic engagement is of no avail at all. The principle is simple: If after the worship of the FEARLESS Lord you still have ‘fear’ embedded in your consciousness; if adoration of Him who is without enmity you are not free from hate and rivalry of fellow beings; if while calling Him the Redeemer of Sinners you practise untouchability as in classical Hinduism; if chanting Him as ‘Akaal’ [Beyond Death] you are scared of dying; if believing that God has no colour, no caste you are a victim of these social vices—in the eyes of the vigilant Guru you are just shamming and caught in hypocrisy of morals and religious exhibitionism 🌿

Sloku Mehla-1

*Nanak meru sareer ka iku rathu iku rathvaahu
Jugu jugu pheri vataayaih gyani bujhaih taahi
Satjugi rathu santokh ka dharamu agei
rathvaahu*

*Tretai rathu jatai ka joru agei rathvaahu
Duaapari rathu tapei ka satu agei rathvaahu
Kaljugi rathu agni ka koodu agei rathvaahu*

[SGGS, Page 470]

Embodied Soul, Nanak, has one chariot and
one charioteer

The wise alone know how in each Age they
change and steer

In the Golden Age, Contentment was the
chariot; Probity, the charioteer

In the Silver Age, Asceticism was the chariot;
Strength, the charioteer

In the Brass Age, Penance was the chariot;
Truth, the charioteer

In the Iron Age, Fire is the chariot; Untruth,
the charioteer





Mixed-Media Painting of Guru Nanak Dev by Dr SS Bhatti especially prepared for this Book



6



GURU NANAK DEV

DISPENSER OF DIVINE LIGHT



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



ADVENT INTO THE MORTAL WORLD



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 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, material, and moral support. With the new Spiritual Realities that his Revelation brought forth, the Hindu-Sikh unity went so far as to muster a psycho-spiritual revolution. Soon it became difficult to distinguish between the traditional and the modern in the extant religious outlook 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 springs 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 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, 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 poorā 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 dwells in Truth because that is the Primal Attribute of God: The Lord *actually* exists [not as a figment of imagination], 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. Guru Nanak describes this solemn state as:

*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-illuminated 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—would it really matter if I said, "No. It had occurred 10 billion years ago?" Either conjecture cannot be proven for or against.

Guru Nanak has stated this curious case with a divine flourish and finality of experience [*not* experiment] that we cannot ignore saying 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 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 make it to be] as an ideal alternative of holistic living encompassing *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, hailing the life of a householder in which *Moksha* was possible to achieve through a committed enactment of the three-pronged formula: *Kirat Karo*, *Vand Chhako*, and *Naam Japo*. He brought about a bloodless revolution in which the paupers rose to be princes—and Maharaja Ranjit Singh demonstrated how 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 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, he did not do anything in his own name—even struck coins in Guru’s Name and called the Sikh reign *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* [Government of Purified Souls].

Guru Nanak Dev offered 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* and *Sarguna* 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 because a concept is a mental construct—a creation of the mind—from which Guru Nanak Dev is studiously trying to the wean the Sikhs' consciousness. He has called all humans driven by the mind's maverick machinations "*Manmukh*" [Mind-Oriented] so that they, guided by *Shabda* [Revealed Word], become "*Gurmukh*" [literally, looking 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 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 God-realisation 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 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 dungeon of pain and disillusionment that whoever gets caught in it has no chance of liberation. They thus insisted that spiritual benediction required the performance of austerities and meditation in splendid isolation. Guru Nanak Dev made bold to declare this centuries-old malaise as fundamentally wrong. To him such an approach smacked of utter selfishness [although not of a lower grade] because it gave the mistaken seekers the liberty to focus entirely on securing their own welfare by shutting their eyes on following a course of action leading to societal weal. His Revelation offered to a chronically sick society such psycho-spiritual exhortations as

To remain unaffected 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
Nanak says: Word-Consciousness aboard the
Name ferries the seeker across worldly ocean



Guru Nanak Dev, founder the Sikh Faith, was succeeded by Nine Gurus. As noted before, 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 Gurbpurab* on *Kartik Pooranmashi*, the full-moon day in the Indian month of *Katak* [*Kartik* in Hindi], October-November.

Guru Nanak travelled far and wide and spread the message 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 have named Creative Mysticism in my second PhD] 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.

Nanak was born on 15 April 1469 at Rai Bho di Talwandi (present-day Nankana Sahib, Punjab, Pakistan) near Lahore, the capital of the State. His parents were Kalyan Chand Das Bedi, his name popularly shortened to Mehta Kalu, and Mata Tripta. His father 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 district of Gurdaspur. He sired two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Chand, both born during the decade of 1490 CE.

Rai Bular Bhatti: Also called Rai Bho di Talwandi (died circa 1515) was a Rajput Muslim noble of the Bhatti clan during the latter-half of the fifteenth

century. He was the chief of Rai Bho di Talwandi (also called Rai Bular's Talwandi), the village where Guru Nanak was born. Later in life, Rai Bular was granted a feudal estate by his son-in-law, Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Governor of the Punjab. Rai Bho selected and rebuilt Talwandi, earlier known as Raipur. This town, which is situated about forty-two miles west of Lahore and eighteen miles south of river Ravi, later came to be known as Nankana Sahib. Gurdwara Nankana Sahib commemorated the birthplace of Guru Nanak.

Bhatti discerned the Divine in Guru Nanak:

Rai Bular had great affection for the young Nanak and held him in high esteem. According to *Janam Sakhis* [Hagiographic accounts of the birth and life of Guru Nanak Dev], Rai Bular discerned the Divine in Guru Nanak and became his second devotee; the Guru's sister Bebe Nanaki was his first devotee. Young Nanak was amazingly precocious with an attitude and outlook all his own that led him to do things by which his father Mehta Kalu—a business man to the core—would be either unnerved or enraged. Bal-Nanak was a perpetual problem for his father, and he kept embroiling more often than not in looking for ways and means to keep him busy *profitably*. Once when young Nanak was sent by him to graze the household cattle,





Gurdwara Nankana Sahib

he as usual soon relapsed into transcendental meditation leaving the animals to their own fate. It was not long before an upset villager came to complain to the Nawab that Nanak's buffaloes had run riot over his and others' cropfields. He was thus arraigned before Rai Bular for having caused substantial damage to the crops. Bhatti sent for Mehta Kalu, and directed him to compensate the farmer for the damage. But footmen sent to estimate the loss reported that

they had seen no damage whatsoever. Rai Bular was as much surprised as the complainant himself, who insisted that he had seen with his own eyes the whole crop ruined and the buffaloes lounging in the midst of it after they had heartily gorged themselves on free fodder.

On another occasion, Guru Nanak, while out with his herd of cattle, lay down to rest under a shade-tree in the summer afternoon and soon fell asleep. After a while, Rai Bular along

with his retinue of servants happened to pass by. The village chief was astounded to see a strange phenomenon. The shadows of other trees had travelled round with the sun, but not shade of the tree under which Nanak was fast asleep.

Returning to the town, the Nawab called Mehta Kalu and told him, “Your son is a great man. He is the honour of my town. Kalu, you have become exalted and I too am exalted, for it’s in my town that such a blessed one has been born.” Guru Nanak reciprocated the honour and affection extended to him by Rai Bular and never failed to visit him whenever he was back home from his long missionary journeys called “Udasis” in Punjabi, and the Nawab always felt blessed to see the divine soul. Therefore, it is no small matter that when Rai Bular Bhatti was lying on his deathbed, the young Guru was by his bedside.

Rai Bular learns about the Guru’s Mission:

The Guru was ready to leave Sultanpur Lodhi for good when the Nawab made an attempt to dissuade him from stepping on the path of renunciation, but when the Guru told the Nawab about his mission he bowed his head in reverence and said, “... but do kindly accept for the use of your family the sum that has been found due to you from the Modikhana.” The Guru desired him to distribute that amount among the poor,

saying, “As for my family and my wherewithal the Sustainer of All will take care of us.” Having given away all his material wealth, he was now ready to distribute, with an equally liberal and generous heart, the spiritual riches that he had received from Lord God.


As Student of Gopal: Nanak was sent to school when he was five. His first teacher Gopal was an agnostic, hard-working and a down-to-earth realist. One Sunday was selected as the most auspicious day for Nanak to begin his schooling. Mehta Kalu offered five rupees to Gopal as a mark of respect and distributed sweets to all the schoolchildren. For three years Gopal gave elementary education to Nanak in language, arithmetic, and other subjects that were taught during those days. Nanak loved poetry, songs, and music. He easily committed to memory everything that was taught to him. Every day he wrote his lessons on a wooden tablet (*Patti* or *Takhti*). Three-year education was followed by the teaching of subjects that could help the students in trade, government service, and other secular pursuits.

Acrostic: Amazing Childhood Composition:

In his first lesson in a secular subject, Gopal asked the students to write it on the *Patti*. In response, unlike his classmates, Nanak wrote



some verses in the form of an acrostic, and showed them to his teacher. He was taken aback by what he saw written on the wooden slate. “So, the boys are right,” said he, “when they say that you keep on humming and composing poems. You really are a *Shā’ir* (poet). He found on the slate an acrostic, written in couplets of extremely simple Punjabi language. What surprised him were the profound thoughts of poems composed by Nanak. Acrostic is a poem or puzzle in which the first (or last) letters of each line spell a word or sentence: an acronym.



Cobra and the Sleeping Nanak: There is another interesting episode of Nanak’s younger days. As was his wont and genetic reflective nature he would regularly walk into the jungle near his home and spend his time in contemplation. Nanak always told people that even when he was sleeping, he was with God. Once when he was fast asleep the sun moved high into the sky as the day wore on, and he would have been exposed to the burning rays of the sun. As Nanak continued to sleep unperturbed, a cobra slid out of its burrow, and drew itself up tall, flaring its hood full width. But instead of striking Nanak, it used its hooded ‘umbrella’ to provide shade for the sleeping boy. This incident and many more convinced the village folks that Nanak was, indeed, an exceptionally blessed human.

Guru Nanak at Hasan Abdal: Baba Wali Kandhari [also spelled ‘Qandhari’] was a Sufi saint or *Pir* [Muslim holy man, religious teacher or recluse especially one with a distinct following] who is believed to have been born in about 1476 CE in Kandahar in Afghanistan. According to folk etymology, the word “kand” or “qand” in Persian and Pashto (the local languages) means “candy”. The name “Candahar” or “Kandahar” in this form translates to ‘candy area’ alluding to the location that is fertile and historically known for producing fine grapes, pomegranates, apricots, melons, and other sweet fruits. Around 1498 CE Kandhari moved to Hasan Abdal near present-day Rawalpindi in Pakistan. This town is about 48 kilometres from Rawalpindi to the west side of the mountains. This being an entirely hilly area, in some places, natural water-fountains would spring up from underground.

Wali Kandhari’s Hermitage: On a nearby hill, at an altitude of 2340 feet [714 metres], Wali Kandhari settled and built a small house near a natural fountain. The water there was very clear and so the town people used to fetch drinking water from this source. Kandhari would preach to the simple people who came there as a necessity. Soon he had enlarged his house into a small community building called *Dera* [Hermitage]. His house was very close to

the fresh water spring from where the water flowed down to the town and people used it for all their needs. There was no other source of fresh drinking water nearby. Therefore, Wali Qandhari used the advantageous location of his hermitage to assist people who followed his faith and to punish those who did not.

Muslim Version of the Story: There lived a Gujjar named Hasan who had many buffaloes. Once a Fakir [a religious mendicant] named Abdal visited him and asked for a draught of milk. Hasan said that he would gladly give him some, but his buffaloes were at that time dry. Hearing this Abdal laid his hand on one of the animals and said, “Now milk it”. He did so, and soon served a copious draught of milk to the strange visitor. Abdal expressed his gratitude to Hasan, and asked what he could do for him. Hasan replied that they were much straitened for want of water, on which Abdal struck the neighbouring hills in two places from which the two streams of the town promptly came forth. On the departure of the Fakir, Hasan told his people that the spot would thenceforth be named after them jointly: *Hasan Abdal*.

Xuanzang’s Account: The famous Chinese traveller Xuanzang who visited the place in the seventh century CE mentions the sacred spring


of Elapatra to the northwest of Taxila which has since been identified as the spring of **Gurdwara Panja Sahib**. William Finch who travelled through India between 1608 and 1611 describes Hasan Abdal to be a “pleasant town with a small river and many fair tanks in which are many fishes with golden rings in their noses ...; the water so clear that you may see a penny in the bottom”.

Guru’s *Kirtan* sanctified the place: Halting here on the foothill with a small party Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana took refuge under the cool shade of a tree. As was their routine practice, they started reciting *Kirtan*. Slowly, the local devotees began to gather at the spot and soon the gathering swelled into a large *Sangat* [Congregation]. The Guru gave discourses about God and the true path of the Holy Name underscoring how we should all remember Him at all times to remain on the path of righteousness.

Wali Kandhari’s Arrogance: Notwithstanding his pretensions to ceremonial piety, Wali Kandhari was an arrogant man who was enraged when he saw people gathering around Guru Nanak in preference to his place. To avenge the growing popularity of the holy intruder he stopped the spring water from flowing down to the town. The people became frustrated and now the question



arose, how could they and their cattle survive without water? A delegation thus went uphill to Baba Wali Kandhari and begged him to let the water flow down as before. But he said angrily, “Go to your Guru, the one you visit daily and ask him for water.” The people went to the Guru and told him the whole story. The Guru said, “Don’t lose heart. Trust in God. He will not let you die of thirst”, and then told Bhai Mardana, “Go up and appeal to Baba Wali Kandhari to let the water flow down to the town.”



Bhai Mardana went up to entreat Kandhari to release water so that the village folk could quench their thirst and give water to the thirsty animals. But as soon as Bhai Mardana got to the top of the hill, the headstrong ‘divine’ began shouting angrily, “Go back to your Guru and ask him to give water to the people. I will not give you any water.” Bhai Mardana who was asked to go again did so reluctantly and very humbly approached Wali Qandhari and begged for water a third time. Unmoved by his pleadings and assuming even more obdurateness, the Wali far from granting his request used abusive language to put him off. Bhai Mardana calmly bore with all the ill treatment meted out to him and politely stuck to his supplication. This time Wali mockingly remarked: “Why don’t you ask your *Master* whom you serve? Isn’t he able to give you any water?”

Guru forgives Wali Kandhari: When Bhai Mardana returned empty handed in utter frustration, the Guru lifted a stone from under his feet and Lo! A jet of cool, clean water shot up to everyone’s surprise. At the same time, miraculously, Wali Qandhari’s spring began to dry up. Red with anger; he could not control his fury and, in a crazy state of his mind, pushed down a large boulder from atop the hill with the intent of crushing the holy personage. The rock came hurtling down towards the Guru who calmly raised his hand to stop it. While his palm-impression got imprinted on the rock it shattered the *pir’s* pride. Instantly, he realised that the Guru was a person of God protected by divine intervention and blessing. He quickly came downhill and fell at Nanak’s feet. The Guru in his infinite mercy said, “Rise, my friend; live as one who truly loves God ought to live, and be kind and humble to all.”

Name ‘Panja’ Sahib: The rock with the Guru’s palm-imprint still exists; commemorated by a beautiful *Gurdwara* [Sikh temple] called *Panja* [Palm-Mark] Sahib. Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s legendary army commander Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, after conquering the Sindh province during the Sikh reign, had the Gurdwara built at the historic site. The present-day Gurdwara, however, was built in mid-1930s on a new design developed

by my father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti [1905-1993] who was a self-taught professional of amazing versatility—artist, architect, sculptor, wood-carver, wrestler, musicologist, political analyst, etc.

Thousands of devotees visit the sanctified site as a Centre of Pilgrimage and when, during

hot summer season, they bathe in the cool water of the historic Gurdwara Panja Sahib *Sarovar* [Sacred Pool] they are in psycho-emotional vibrations with the Holy Word that God had given to Guru Nanak Dev through Revelation as Divine Sacrament via Rivulet *Vain* [also spelled “Bein”] in Punjab.



Gurdwara Panja Sahib



From a Pakistani newspaper editorial:

“In 1994, the foundation-stone of Nankana Sahib Foundation was laid by Rai Bashir Ahmad Khan Bhatti, a member of the National Assembly and chairman of the Standing Committee on Education. Mr Bhatti is the oldest living descendent of Chaudhary Rai Bular Bhatti, a contemporary of Guru Nanak, who had recognised that the Guru was a divine soul. Over the last five hundred years, the Bhatti family has donated almost 11,000 acres of its land to the Sikh religious shrines in and around Nankana Sahib. The 1994 foundation, built over 10 acres of land, was donated by Chaudhary Rai Sarwar Bhatti, also a direct descendent of Rai Bular Bhatti.

The entire Nankana Sahib Estate consists of 16,962 acres. Most of it is leased to the farmers and residents of Nankana Sahib. Almost all the houses in Nankana Sahib are built on this property. The Nankana Sahib Estate is the property of the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara (Gurdwara Janam Asthan).”

The old name of town was Talwandi Rai Bhoë Ki or “Talwandi of Rai Bhoë”, as noted before, a Muslim Rajput of the Bhatti clan and a retainer of the Delhi rulers of the early-fifteenth century.

His descendant, Rai Bular, the chief of Talwandi, was a contemporary of Guru Nanak. The town has nine *Gurdwaras* including the *Gurdwara Janam Asthan* which marks the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev.

Guru Nanak’s Times: It is very important to understand the social, cultural and political environment in Northern India—especially in the Punjab State and Delhi during the lifetime of Guru Nanak Dev from 1469 to 1539. In 1451, before the birth of Nanak, Bahlol Lodhi occupied Delhi and founded the Lodhi dynasty. The Guru was an eye witness to the rise and establishment of the Lodhi dynasty and then its capture by Babur who founded the Mughal Empire in India. The establishment of the Sikh Faith was in direct response to the socio-cultural and political events that occurred during the stated historical period.

Storekeeper in Modikhana: In Sultanpur Lodhi that is in present-day Kapurthala district of the Punjab, Jairam, husband of Bebe Nanaki, Nanak’s sister, got him a job as a storekeeper/accountant in the Modikhana [Provisions Store] of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi, a distant relative of the reigning Sultan of Delhi Sikandar Lodhi. Sikandar was the son of Bahlol Lodhi who as we have come to know had established the Lodhi

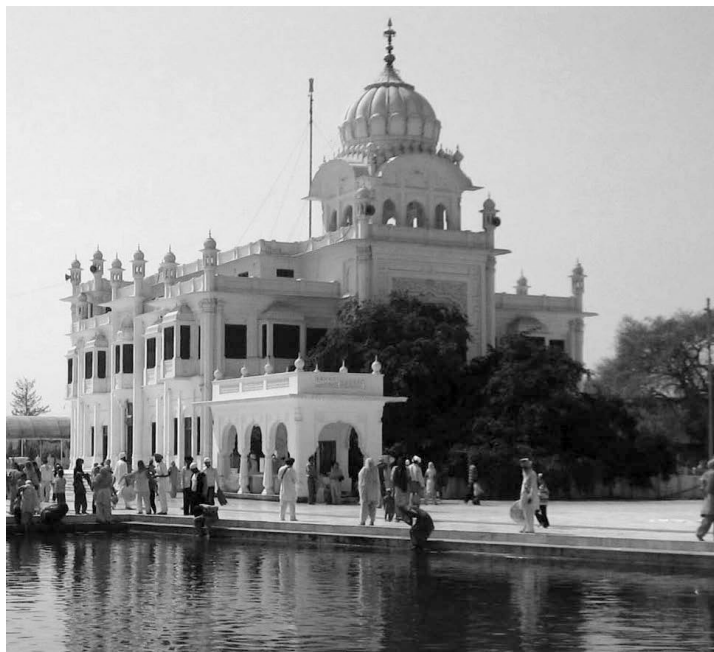
dynasty in India. While Nanak discharged his duties diligently and won the affection of his employer, he was always preoccupied in spiritual matters and was never at peace with the status quo of the corrupt existing social order. Although it is commonly believed and accepted his employment as ‘storekeeper’, according to some researchers and historians, Guru Nanak actually headed what we would today call the Ministry of Food & Finance that was next only to the highest position of the Nawab as the Ruling Lord.

Modikhana Miracle: One day at the Modikhana, the Guru while weighing out wheat flour, counted - One, Two, Three ...’ till he reached the number thirteen where he lost all count and started chanting - Tera, Tera, Tera...’ [Thine, Thine, Thine]. ‘Tera’ is the Punjabi word for the figure 13 and in the present context means, “It’s yours!” His mind, transfixed on the Divine, would not stoop to earthly things, and all subsequent weighments went singularly 13. The customers were happy to receive the extra provisions and did not know how to carry away so many goods. They could not understand the bounties of the Lord. Eventually the problem was reported to Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi with a charge against the divine storekeeper that he was recklessly distributing food grains. The

Nawab promptly ordered an inquiry that was conducted with utmost care. His detractors were in for a rude shock when the investigating officers found the stores full; in fact, the accounts showed surplus quantity in favour of Guru Nanak. This, indeed, was God’s call on receiving which Nanak first went to the house where he used to lodge his disciples, guests, and friends. He opened wide the doors and invited the poor to take away all that was there; and to those who hesitated, he himself handed over his articles.

Holy Service at Sultanpur: Guru Nanak used to give discourses to *Sangats* every evening at Sultanpur. Many would come to join the holy service, and were served food by the Guru out of the ration that was permitted to him with his salary. He distributed all that he saved, for he had no liking for hoarding. Guru Nanak had ample opportunities there to satisfy his obsession for open-handed charity. After meeting the needs and expenses of his own family out of his allowances and profit, he used to give away a large part of his earnings in charity. His charity was his love in kind for humankind [Business transactions used to be made either in cash or kind]. He thus earned affection of the poor and the needy and admiration of the people at large.





Gurdwara Ber Sahib, Sultanpur Lodhi

Divided Society: However, in Sultanpur; indeed, in all of Northern India, Nanak saw a society deeply divided between Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims were a relatively new arrival in Punjab—they had begun coming in about 1000 CE—but eventually they started forcible conversion of the local Hindu population to Islam alongside of enslavement of women and children. An integral part of Muslim society was slavery—the nobles and royals kept large retinues of domestic male and female slaves. Interestingly, unlike what we learn from the tales

of western slavery, we see that the relationship between the master and the slave in 15th-century Punjab was emotional and humanitarian. On the other hand, the Sufis also played a huge role in the peaceful conversion of people to Islam. Despite the ideal norm of equality in Islam, the Muslim society had degraded into innumerable social divisions.

At Daggers Drawn: The Hindu society was no better either—and the ideal norm of social differentiation and discrimination was by caste as birthright or birth-deprivation. In the 11th century, Al-Biruni, a famous Persian mathematician, who also proposed a method to calculate the circumference of the earth, described in detail the division of the Hindu society. There were at least 36 social groups and except for the higher caste Brahmins and Kshatriyas, the proverbial teeming millions lived in abject poverty. The condition of the untouchables was outright inhuman. Women fared no better; child marriage was rampant, women were regarded as inferior to men, and widows in particular were treated with contempt. The Brahmins advocated meaningless rituals as a tool to further oppress the common people in order to maintain their hold on the masses. These social norms remained unchanged even in the 15th

century in which Nanak was born. Added to this sordid situation was the discomfiting fact that Hindus and Muslims were always at daggers drawn.

Dismal Picture of Social Order: Emerging from this brief exposition is a dismal picture of the prevalent social order: barring a chosen few, everyone was bereft of basic human rights of equality, freedom, and justice. Any deviation from these inhuman social norms, regardless whether one was a Muslim or a Hindu, was not only intolerable but also punishable by law. Living in Sultanpur Lodhi [named after Sultan Khan Lodhi who was a general of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1103 CE] amidst such repressive conditions of Indian society, Nanak, at the age of 30, proclaimed “There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim” and caused a historic breakthrough from the shackles of centuries-old psycho-social perversion. He declared that everyone being the child of one God had the birthright to a live a life of freedom and dignity.

Guru’s Hymns as Historical Records: Guru Nanak has the distinction of having been an eye witness to the tyranny and trauma of the period between 1519 and 1526—the most dramatic in the political landscape of Punjab—even more so, because he is the only god man to

have well documented in his hymns [an unusual medium for writing history] the unfortunate misadventures of invaders of the time and mass-scale bloodshed that they caused to capture the Golden Sparrow that India was perceived to be in the eyes of the lust-blinded foreigners. What perhaps has not been properly noticed by historians and scholars in his matchless ‘memoirs’ is the crucial fact how Guru Nanak had imbibed in his own life the divine attributes of *Ik Omkar*, notably, *fearlessness*, and then demonstrated their spiritual power in real-life situation with absolutely no fear or favour. Out in the town square he told Babur in his face that he was not Babur [Lion] but *Jabir* [Tyrant]. The Guru spelled out and propagated the fundamental human rights of equality, freedom, and justice. He provided moral justification for the use of force if it were imperative to preserve the dignity of human life. His exhortation was: *Must you have passion for playing the game of love come hither to my street with thy head on thy palm!* This proclamation along with other divine exhortations eventually laid the foundations of the *Khalsa* during the dynamic Spiritual Ministry of the Last and Tenth Master of the Sikh Faith, Guru Gobind Singh.

Consolidation of the Sikh Faith: Babur, the founder of Mughal Empire in India, died in

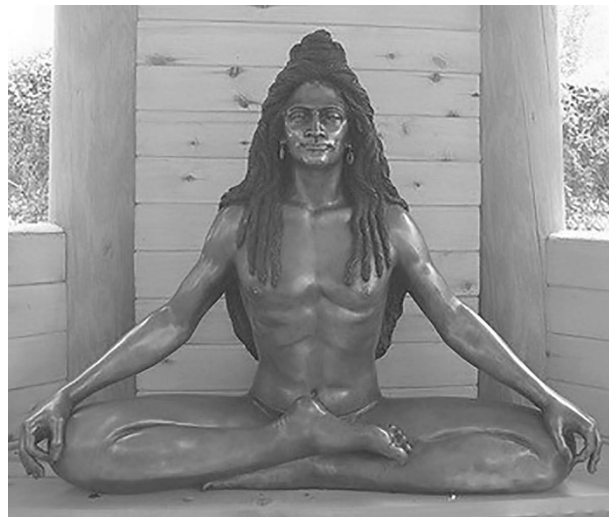


1530; his death resulting in a relatively peaceful period in north-west India's history. There were no further skirmishes of contending political outfits with his son and successor Humayun. This fortuitous interregnum enabled the Guru to consolidate the growing community of his disciples and he successfully laid a solid foundation for the raising of Sikh Faith's superstructure.

Baba Sri Chand [1494–1643 CE] was the elder son of Guru Nanak Dev. Sri Chand had a reputation of saintliness, and was respected and liked by one and all. Bebe Nanaki adopted him and brought him up as her son. He grew up to be a renunciative Yogi, and founded the still-surviving Udasi Sect. He was a Baal Jogeeshwar who lived to be 149 years old, but always looked like a young boy of 12. He was one of the world's greatest acknowledged Yogis. Sri Chand had mastered the techniques of *yoga* [now popular worldwide—June 21 has since been declared as World Yoga Day] at a very young age.

Baba Sri Chand remained devoted to his father, and established the Udasi order. He travelled far and wide and spread awareness of Guru Nanak's divine message. He was held in high esteem by the successor Sikh Gurus. Baba Mohan, the eldest son of Guru Amar Das and the person who is best known as

the custodian of Guru Sahib's *Pothis* (*Shabads* or hymns in manuscript form) from which Guru Arjun Dev compiled *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, also became a recluse, possibly influenced by Sri Chand.



Baba Sri Chand

Since Guru Nanak had chosen Bhai Lehna as his worthy successor, an impression has since been created that his approach to religion, diagonally opposed as it was to his father's, Baba Sri Chand preferred to stay away from the Sikh Faith in protest. This is far from true. The choice was determined by the signal fact that *Guru Nanak was promoting a householder's life as a fit means of God-realisation* whereas his son's chosen

lifestyle was one of renunciation that commended strict aloofness from the trials and tribulations of workaday existence.

After Guru Nanak left Nankana Sahib, however, Sri Chand stayed back in Dera Baba Nanak and maintained the Guru's temple. Subsequently, having established the Udasi Order, he travelled far and wide to spread the Sikh Faith. When the Fourth Master Guru Ram Das met Baba Sri Chand, the elderly Yogi commented that his visitor sported the longest beard he had ever seen. In characteristic humility, the Guru replied, "This is to wipe dust off the feet of the saints like you!" Saying so, when Guru Ram Das bent down to *actually* perform the act, Sri Chand pulled his feet back in utter surprise.

In deference for Baba Sri Chand's desire, the Sixth Master Guru Har Gobind gave his son Baba Gurditta to him for adoption. After his death at the age of 149, Baba Gurditta succeeded him as Head of the Udasis Order. The Udasis lovingly protected and maintained the historical shrines of Anandpur, Hazoor Sahib, and Amritsar for over a hundred years after Guru Gobind Singh's demise. They established schools of learning to nurture and spread the Sikh Faith. Centres of Sikh Pilgrimage established by Baba Sri Chand in Afghanistan and Iraq were not called *Gurdwaras*; they were known as *Dharamsaals* named after him.

BHAI MARDANA



As Guru Nanak's lifelong companion and his rebeck player Bhai Mardana was the Guru's first disciple and, therefore, the first Sikh outside the Guru's household because at home it was his elder sister Bebe Nanaki to earn this historic honour. Guru's inspiring company was a blessing for Mardana because with characteristic wit and humour of a Punjabi minstrel, he became a poet and philosopher in the course of time. He was a Muslim by birth and a Mirasi [regarded very low in the Muslim social order] or minstrel by caste and played rebeck as a vocation. Mardana was

born at Talwandi Rae Bhoie Ki, which was the hometown of Guru Nanak, in 1459, and 10 years senior to him. Mardana's parents had lost all their children. When Mardana was born, his mother out of sheer despair and desperation called him *Marjana*, Punjabi word for someone who was always on the verge of death. As the legend has it, his mother thought he was wasting his life accompanying the Guru and would often use this rotten nickname to call him back home. Guru Nanak changed his name to Mardana meaning brave or manly and, in divine parlance, someone who would never die. Not surprisingly, he survived and lived a fairly long life of sixty-one years. In fact, he lives eternally because wherever, whenever the name of Guru Nanak is uttered Mardana's shows up miraculously along side.

Mardana's mother was Lakho and father Badra who served as the family bard of Guru Nanak's father Mehta Kalu. Badra and Mardana called every morning at the houses of local residents and obtained alms generally in kind in the form of flour or some eatables. Both would sing to the accompaniment of music they played on rebeck and on receiving charity would move next door. Nanak as a child listened to their sweet music and felt fascinated. He had thus a natural attraction for the young Mardana.

In the course of time, Nanak left Talwandi and went to Sultanpur Lodhi where, as noted

before, he was employed in the service of Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Governor of the Jalandhar Doab. Mehta Kalu was not getting good reports about Nanak's work. It, therefore, struck him that Mardana's company might do him good and sent him to Sultanpur when he was thirty years old. Nanak was highly pleased at his arrival. Thence it became daily practice for them to sing songs together in praise of God in a public place in the morning and evening before and after office hours. Their melodious voices and soulful strains on the rebeck touched the hearts of listeners, transporting them into a state of bliss. Both lived together and became inseparable. This drama was daily enacted in the streets of Sultanpur for seven long years.

When Nanak became a missionary, he decided to move from place to place accompanied by Mardana; eventually both left for Talwandi. While passing through Muslim villages they stayed in a Faqir's *Takia* [Muslim monastery] generally situated near a graveyard. There they recited verses in praise of Allah. As Mardana attended prayers in a mosque, Nanak also accompanied him, and sometimes joined in prayers. The fanaticism of the Mulla [Muslim priest] or Maulvi was often softened by the presence of Mardana who thought that under Mardana's influence Nanak might embrace Islam.

Visiting Sayyadpur and Sialkot on the way, they reached Talwandi. Nanak stayed outside the town, while Mardana called upon his family folks. He had a wife and two sons named Shahzada and Raizada and a daughter. Nanak's parents called on him and tried in vain to persuade him to lead the settled life of a householder. Mardana's wife and children also failed to detain him. In a couple of days both left together for Multan. In due course they returned to Sultanpur Lodhi. This took place in 1496.

As is well known, and this subject has been dealt in detail in this book, Guru Nanak undertook several journeys. At the old harbour of Kot Lakhpat they sailed for Arabia. Having visited Mecca and Medina they went to Baghdad in Iraq, the capital of the Caliphs of Islam. As usual they stayed outside the town near a graveyard. Nanak's visit to Baghdad is recorded in the Vars of Bhai Gurdas who wrote:

*Baba gaya Baghdad noon baahar jaayei
kiya asthaana
Ik Baba akaal roop dooja rabaabi Mardana*

Baba went to Baghdad, and outside the town
set up their shelter
Baba the Immortal was accompanied by
Mardana the rebeck-player

Right on the roadside Nanak began to sing hymns in praise of God, and Mardana played a symphonic strain on his musical instrument. The language of the people being Arabic listeners could only catch the names of Allah and Khuda, but the combination of a melodious voice, soul-uplifting tune, and the singers' saintly appearances produced a soothing effect on their minds. But as music was a taboo in Islam, somebody objected to their performance remarking that music turned mind away from God towards sensuality. Nanak could understand and speak some broken Arabic. He replied that God created music, and that He was more easily accessible through pleasing poetry than pale prose.

The blessed duo of pilgrims stayed there for some time but Mardana's health and spirit had been failing, and he felt tired of travelling. To reach home they had to cover a distance of about 5,000 kilometres. If they could walk at the rate of 20 kilometres a day it would take them 9 or 10 months. At this prospect Mardana's heart began to sink. He had realised his life's ambition of making a pilgrimage to the greatest holy places and sacred shrines of Islam at Mecca, Medina, and Baghdad. He had won the title of Haji. He did not want to go farther. He felt that he would die at this holy place. As luck would have it, he soon afterwards breathed his last in peace and tranquillity.



Nanak grew sad. The separation was unbearable. But the Guru had a stout heart and an indomitable will. Besides he had a certain mission in life. With a heavy heart he performed the obsequies of Mardana with his own hands. A humble monument was erected in memory of Mardana. Within an enclosure on a wall an inscription in mixed Turkish and Arabic marks the site. Mardana was called Murad by the residents of Baghdad and being older than Nanak by ten years was considered Guru. Consequently the inscription which was put up after Guru Nanak's departure said: "Guru Murad died. Baba Nanak faqir helped in constructing this building, which is an act of grace from a virtuous follower, 927 A.H."

[SikhiWiki – Free Sikh Encyclopaedia]

However, according to some sources, when Guru Nanak was returning from Mecca and Medina, Bhai Mardana died near the river Khurram in Afghanistan in 1520 CE at the age of 61. The monument lies near a graveyard, 2.5 kilometres away from the railway station.

Mardana was a master rebeck-player. He improved the old form of instrument by fixing 4 to 6 strings to a hollow gourd so as to produce deep and mellow resonance. He sang devotional songs of Kabir, Ravidas, Tarlochan, Beni, Dhanna and Nanak. He composed verses also, three of which are included in the *Adi Granth* in *Bihagre*

ki Var. Their theme discountenances the use of wine which brings about misery, lust, pride, self-conceit, falsehood, ill health, and disease.

Mardana says:

The barmaid is misery, wine is lust; man
is the drinker

The cup filled with worldly love is wrath
and it is served by pride

The company is false and covetous, and
is ruined by excess of drink
Instead of such wine make good conduct thy
clarified butter and modesty thy meat to eat.

Such things, O Nanak, are obtained by
the Guru's favour; by partaking of them
sins depart

Mardana's last wish to Guru Nanak a little before his death was: "*Only ferry me across this ocean of the world for the sake of the Word of God, which I have been singing to thee and thy people.*"

On his return to Punjab, Guru Nanak visited Talwandi where his parents and Mardana's too had died. He shared his condolences on his

parents' tragic loss with his wife and two sons. He persuaded Mardana's elder son Shahzada to accept his father's post, and assured him of equal honour, care, and consideration. Shahzada joined the service, and accompanied the Guru to Kartarpur that he had founded to spend his last years. Shahzada served as the Guru's chief minstrel as well as that of the Sikh *Sangats* [Holy Company].

SACHA SAUDA

Perhaps the most famous episode connected with Guru Nanak's life is the story of "*Sacha Sauda*". Its popular English translation as "True Bargain", in my view, is not right. Bargaining takes place at the time of purchasing merchandise with a view to making a favourable transaction; an advantageous purchase and subsequently selling it to earn profit. In "*Sacha Sauda*" the Guru did none of these things, and entered into a trade of a curious kind. The word 'trade' is, therefore, more appropriate because a trader only buys and sells merchandise that he does not manufacture and engages in it as a way of livelihood, especially skilled but not learned. It goes without saying that livelihood would be earned only if he makes profit in selling his wares at a price higher than its cost—and obviously he would always strive to buy merchandise at less

price and sell it at more to earn his living. When Mehta Kalu sent young Nanak with Mardana to buy some merchandise with twenty rupees he was initiating his son into business whose commerce was primarily profit-making. His father was disappointed that Nanak's mind was not into farming and other worldly work. He, therefore, thought perhaps engaging him in trade would, firstly, be a good profitable occupation for his son, and, secondly, he would be happy all day talking to his clients about his business rather than dalliance with other-worldly fancies.

On Maiden Business Trip: Nanak and Mardana started from Talwandi towards *Choochar-Khaana* on this maiden business trip on an auspicious day that had been chosen by the Pandit [Family Astrologer] through ritual foreseeing. They had hardly gone ten or twelve miles from the village when they came across a village infested by an epidemic, where the people were thirsty, hungry, and sick due to lack of water and an outbreak of disease. Nanak told Mardana, "Father has asked us to carry out some profitable transaction. No bargain can be truly profitable than to feed and clothe these naked and hungry children and adults. I cannot let go of this God-send opportunity to strike a profitable deal. Taking all the money from Mardana he went to the nearest village where he bought plentiful



supply of food and brought water for the disease-ridden villagers. He felt that he had struck the best deal and earned enormous profit on it by investing twenty rupees in the divine trade of “Free Community Kitchen” called *Langar*.

The popular story that Nanak had fed hungry *Sadhus* has gained since the fifteenth century so much currency and acceptability as to have become deeply ingrained in the Sikh “Collective Unconscious”. But this is dead against the Guru’s primary tenet and, therefore, the little-known true episode has been narrated above.

The fresh story told here underscores the crucial tenet of “*Vand Chhako*” [Share what you have with poor and the needy] which has been succinctly explained by Guru Amardas thus: *ਇਸੁ ਤੇਥੈ ਥਾਵਹੁ ਗਰਿਹੇ ਭਲਾ ਜਥਿਹੁ ਕੇ ਵਰਸਾਇ* “*Instead of asking alms wearing these beggarly robes, better be a householder, and give charity to others.*” [SGGS, Page 58]

Gurdwara Sacha Sauda commemorates the spot in the city of Farooqabad (now in Pakistan) where the historic episode narrated before had taken place. An elderly Muslim man narrated to a Sikh researcher the story that corroborates what is written above. Nanak fed the hungry and the sick villagers, not, as is popularly believed, the shirkers, loitering *Sadhus*

[mendicants] who, according to *Gurbani*, are a burden on society. The narrator was grateful that the Guru had saved his ancestors from starvation and sickness by coming to their timely rescue. This is the foundation of *Guru-ka-Langar* [Free Community Kitchen for everyone regardless of their caste, colour, creed, ethnicity, and national prejudices]. A sum of twenty rupees invested by Guru Nanak has inspired Sikhs all over the world for doing never-ending *sewa* [service] of the poor, the needy, and the sick, as an eloquent example that upholds the supreme virtue of a householder’s life. Guru Amardas reiterates Guru Nanak’s exhortation thus: “*Doing good deeds to the people is the Sikh Way of Life. A Sikh’s day is made when he shares whatever he has with the needy.*”



Gurdwara Sacha Sauda

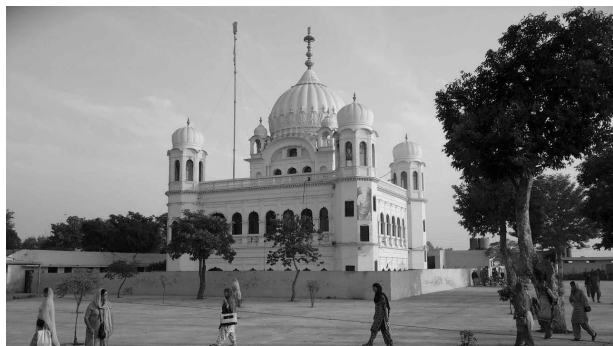
On their way back home when they arrived near Talwandi, Nanak said to Mardana, “You go to the village alone while I wait here.” Mardana went to the village and narrated the whole story to Mehta Kalu; also told him where his son was waiting. Furious that they had wasted so much of money on feeding the hungry and the sick, he put aside all work and asked Mardana to take him to where his son was. Reaching the well where Nanak had been waiting, he caught hold of him and vented his anger by slapping him hard. For the worldly-wise father, the amassing of wealth was the only *true bargain* because he knew that in this world money alone is the mark of nobility; only the wealthy are looked up to as wise, and considered gentle, honest, pious; above all, magnanimous benefactors of humanity. Nobody gives a damn to the means by which the money is earned by the dishonest and powerful.

An Important Lesson: To my reckoning, there is an important lesson in this episode. A son does not naturally follow the occupation of his father; otherwise, Nanak would have been a businessman or an accountant as Mehta Kalu had wished. By the same token, one of Guru Nanak’s two sons would have been a natural successor to his Spiritual Ministry, but it did not happen that way. The gift of Spirituality is the

rarest of rare divine endowment. God confers it on those He chooses by His own inscrutable will regardless of their caste, creed, colour, gender, nationality, and ethnicity.

Last Years of Life: Guru Nanak spent the last 18 years of his life living with his wife and family at Kartarpur [Lord God’s Habitation], the town he had founded on the bank of river Ravi in West Punjab now in Pakistan. He took to farming for earning his livelihood as a living example of his triune formula: *Kirat Karo*; *Vand Chhako*; and *Naam Japo*. He established a *Dharamsaal* [literally. God’s House—meant as a resting place for travellers] which eventually became the nerve centre for Sikh Way of Life. Guru Nanak preached the Name of God [NAAM], affirmed his belief in the equality of all humankind and upheld the right to lead a dignified life, free from religious coercion, social bondage, and political oppression. It is noteworthy that such resting places for travellers had existed before but it was Guru Nanak who renamed them *Dharamsaals*; their earlier name was ‘*Ramasaals*’. In doing so, he imparted to them the divine touch of universalness by obliterating the parochial suggestion that they belonged to Hinduism. Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib commemorates the town founded by Guru Nanak.





Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib

Hindu Ritualism and Mythological Mentality:

According to Hindu religious books and *Manusmriti* [an ancient legal text among the many *Dharma Shastras* of Hinduism], the first birth of an Aryan is from his biological mother, and it is his second birth when he is given the sacred thread or *Yajnopavita* (*Janeu*) in a ceremony called *Upanayanam* that is considered to be a very significant and auspicious event in the life of a devout Hindu. There is a third birth that takes place when performance of a sacrifice is initiated. Out of these three births the second one outclasses the other two as this is for the sake of Vedas. In this birth, Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, becomes his spiritual mother and teacher, and the Brahmin *Guru* his father. A strict injunction forbids the one who has not been thus initiated to read or pronounce any Vedic text except at the time of funeral rites.

Inbuilt Discrimination: Interestingly [because it shows the inbuilt discrimination that Brahmins had invented and practised for centuries and continue to do so claiming its divine origin] a boy belonging to the highest caste, Brahmin, is eligible for the ceremony of the sacred thread when he is between five and eight; the Kshatriya between nine and eleven; and the Vaishya is entitled to it at the age of twelve. The age for the third birth concerning the Saraswati initiation is sixteen, twenty-two, and twenty-four for a Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya, respectively.

Unfettered by the Sacred Thread: Born as a Kshatriya in the subcaste *Bedi* [one who has mastered one Veda] the time was ripe for Nanak to receive this sacred thread when he crossed his ninth year. His parents were very religious and had organised a grand gala function for their only son. Nanak was a genius and, according to Pandit Hardial, the family's *Purohita* (Brahmin priest), once initiated by this ceremony of sacred thread, he would have access to the treasure of the knowledge of the Vedas and other Hindu religious books. The *Purohita* said that without any doubt one day Nanak after having gone through the *Upanayanam* ceremony would become a great scholar of Vedic texts including *Manusmriti* and Hindu sacred literature.

In 1479, this *Upanayanam* ceremony was a day of great festivity in the household of Mehta Kalu who was a highly respected Hindu as prominent *Patwari* for Talwandi village. This rural habitat was, like all the surrounding villages, under the control of the Muslims who had invaded India and decided to stay in the conquered province of Punjab.

Mehta Kalu who was a much worried man because his son freely mixed and played with not only Muslim children but also with Hindu ‘untouchable’ children whose parents could only dream of dying, to be reborn again into a higher caste, before their children were entitled to wear such a magical string. This day was one for which Nanak’s father had waited with great eagerness and anticipation. Therefore, in an atmosphere of joyous hustle and bustle, a big feast was planned for the event. Hordes of relatives from far and near as well as friends and the village folks were invited to partake of the grand feast.

Nanak’s Lateral Thinking: At the time of this ceremony, Nanak was already famous throughout the territory for what we today call lateral, or outside the box, thinking. The questions he put to his teachers and the elderly not only unnerved them but also left them embarrassed. In sharp contradistinction, he

himself gave intelligent answers to questions asked by other people as well as the village elders. His logic was irrefutable and everyone loved him for his HUMILITY in asking innocent but probing questions and for his extraordinary genius in answering such questions himself with convincing explanations. He was the only one in his village who dared to think laterally, and question the centuries-old traditions and their irrational explanations that both the Hindu and Muslim priests patently, if unthinkingly, gave. However, Nanak’s logic was not born of ratiocinative cerebration. It would shoot forth from Divine Light in his heart that God had blessed him with at birth.

The Sacred Fire was Lit: *Havan*, the sacred fire, was lit amidst the chanting of verses from Hindu religious books. Everyone gathered around the fire and took their assigned seats. Pandit Hardial asked Nanak to sit by his side so that he could perform the ceremony of *Yajnopavita*, the ritualistic investiture of the sacred thread. Nanak moved close to the Brahmin priest and said, “Pandit Ji, can I ask you some questions about *Yajnopavita*?” “Of course, you can. Your father has already told me about *your* inquisitiveness. Let us finish the ceremony first and then I will answer all your questions,” replied Pandit Hardial.



“Pandit Ji, I request you to answer my questions first to mentally prepare me to enjoy the whole ceremony?” urged Nanak. Pandit Hardial replied, “In fact, I knew that you’ll ask me questions about this ceremony and I have come prepared to answer all your questions. However, before you ask me a question; I will explain in detail for the benefit of everyone here what the significance of *Yajnopavita* is. I am sure this will answer most of your questions.” “Yes, that will be good”, said Nanak. Pandit Hardial started addressing the audience; then, recited verses from *Manusmriti* and other Hindu religious texts. Bulk of the audience could not understand a word of what he said but yet they submissively bowed their heads in awe of the incomprehensible scriptural pronouncements. The priest glanced at the audience appreciatively because it was spellbound by his erudition. He looked at child Nanak who was listening to the discourse with rapt attention imbibing each and every word, and seemed to have understood everything very well.

The Pandit continued. “All this is from our ancient scriptures. We should never question our scriptures. Anyone who questions them will not only go to hell himself but his entire family and the next seven generations would also be damned and doomed. As you know Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas wear the sacred thread because wearing it is a very sacred ceremony amongst the

Hindus. A Brahmin becomes a true Brahmin only after this ceremony. Similarly, a Kshatriya and a Vaishya become true Kshatriya and Vaishya only after ceremony of the sacred thread. Our *Shastras* say that *Janmana jayate sudrah, karmana jayate dvijah*, which means that by birth we are all Shudras, but by *Upanayanam* ceremony we are re-born [*Dwij*] as Brahmins or Kshatriyas or Vaishyas—properly so called.” Even in their so-called spiritual practices, the Brahmins’ pathogenic fact of innate hatred for the Shudras cannot be camouflaged!

Pandit Hardial looked at the audience and noticed that the fear of curse was visible on their faces. However, he noticed that it did not have any impact on Nanak who was smiling and looked eager waiting for his opportunity to say something. He thought it would be worthwhile to know what is going on in his mind. He addressed Nanak in a very affectionate manner.

“Dear Nanak does this clear all your doubts about the sacred thread. I am sure it does?”

“Not really”, replied Nanak.

“OK, honey, tell me what is going on in your mind, I will clear all your doubts. Ask me any question you have in your mind.”

“Pundit Ji tell me why do women do not get this Janeu?” asked Nanak.

“That is not right sweetie. They do get it, but indirectly. You’ll know when you marry. At that time we will give you one more Janeu for your wife,” said Pandit Hardial with a smile at his face. He continued, “It is laid down in our religious books that the husband will wear a Janeu for his wife. Husband is like a god to his wife.”

“Pundit Ji, is it not unfair and what if a woman dies before her marriage?”

“No, it is not unfair as it is written in Manu Smriti and Shastras. I told you before, you should never ever question your religious books. It is a great sin. Besides you should not talk about death at this auspicious occasion. Once we finish with your questions I will recite some pious verses to purify the atmosphere of the sad things you have just said’ Pandit Hardial mutters something from his mouth that no one could hear.


“I do not agree when you say that it is a sin to question the authority of the religious books,” replied Nanak.

Why?

“First of all it is not a matter of questioning the authority; the fundamental question here is to understand what is written in what we call our religious books. We cannot understand unless and until we ask questions. And if we do not understand we cannot follow the instructions contained in these books. Besides God gave us a brain to think and question, so there cannot be a sin in using our intellect to know what is wrong or right. We must study in depth all our scriptures to gain knowledge. We can do so only when we question and seek answers. I have personal experience in this regard. While at school with Pt Brij Nath, I finished reading all the books in his library. While reading these books millions of questions came to my mind and I shared these questions with Pt Baij Nath Ji and other learned people I know. Similarly while studying with Maulvi Qutab-ud-Deen I asked him all the questions that came to my mind. My mate Mardana will certify that this helped us to understand what is written in the books. In fact it is a sin if we do not use this gift of God and keep on doing something, which is wrong without questioning it. This extraordinary gift of intellect is what distinguishes mankind from the other species on this earth. I would



go even further to say that we should use our intellect when we worship God and donate money in the name of religion. Otherwise it is highly likely that someone can cheat us in the name of God and religion.” [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/The_Hindu_Sacred_Thread,_Janeu]



Nanak, the Charitable Guru: Even when Guru Nanak was yet a child his compassionate heart would melt in deep sympathy for the poor and the needy. He often offered them food and clothing. Child Nanak took great pleasure in visiting and serving bands of Hindu Sadhus and Muslim Fakirs, who lived in the woods in the neighbourhood of Talwandi and would come to the town off and on. Sometimes he would himself go to the jungle and meet them there, and distribute among them articles of food. His father, Mehta Kalu, wanted to check what he thought were wasteful indulgences of his spendthrift son. But he knew not how to counsel Nanak to mend his ways. Charity, open-handed charity, was in the emotional construct of his moral fibre. He had come to tend and feed with the bread of benediction the souls and the bodies of poor and the needy. In the words of Puran Singh, “Whosoever met him; the Guru burnt his poverty and his clinging thereto and made him rich.”

Once, the Guru’s father complained to Rai Bular that his son gave away his earnings to the poor. Rai Bular, in reply, warned Mehta Kalu saying: “Your son is not an ordinary man. You can have from me double the amount that he spends on the needy, but do not stop him from doing so.” There are many interesting stories from the early life of the Divine Master when he was at Talwandi that he really enjoyed distributing articles of daily needs to the poor and feeding the hungry at all times. Wherever Nanak went charity moved with him like his shadow. He felt that in giving he was performing God-assigned duty of socially-beneficent action. No one thus went away disappointed from his door.

SIKH FAITH’S DISTINGUISHED TRAITS

Guru Nanak was born in a society sharply divided into Hindus and Muslims, and there were further subdivisions within Hinduism and Islam, and deep-rooted discrimination was order of the day. Dignified life was a distant dream of the masses, and the general atmosphere had deteriorated to such an extent that the poor and helpless were brutally oppressed by the ruling classes. Women were held inferior to men who looked down upon them as mere chattel. Added to such an environment of turbulence and

despair was the dynamics of political rivalry and wrangling for ruling power. Having captured the Lodhi Empire, Babur established the oppressive Mughal Empire in India. Providentially, in this culturally debased society, Guru Nanak's disciples were the only ones who rebelled against the pervert socio-political order, and created a whole new identity for themselves.

Some of the significant values that Guru Nanak instilled in his followers veered round his triune formula of “*Kirat Karo; Vand Chhako; and Naam Japo*”. It inspired them to outrightly reject asceticism, and instead grasp the oft-ignored importance of honesty and hard work as integral to a householder's life. Such an unprecedented initiative was taken in the pursuit of a casteless society that would guarantee equality for all, and work towards everyone's betterment *en masse*.

The genesis, growth, worth, and perennial relevance of the Sikh Faith began with the birth of the founder Guru Nanak Dev in 1469 CE to the death of Guru Gobind in 1708 CE. This period coincided with the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India. The Mughal rulers followed the policy of oppression and persecution that the Sikh Gurus fiercely opposed and even sacrificed their lives to uphold the fundamental human rights grounded in the recognition of the intrinsic goodness and dignity and of the equal


and inalienable rights of all members of the human family such as equality before law, freedom of speech and expression, freedom to practise religion, and freedom to seek justice through peaceful and legal means.

The Tenets of the Sikh Faith as enunciated by Guru Nanak: Unswerving faith in One Lord God who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; Engagement in socially-beneficent activities [*Sewa*]; Collective singing of paeans to the Glory and Grandeur of Lord God [*Kirtan*]; and Regular participation in Holy Congregation [*Satsang*]. He established a network of preaching centres each called a *Manji* [Diocese]. He appointed able and committed followers to head each diocese.

‘Sikh’ is one of the 30,000 most commonly used words in the Collins dictionary. A ‘Sikh’ is a member of the world's youngest and most pragmatic of world's major religions. The Sikh Faith was founded by Guru Nanak [1469 - 1539 CE] in Punjab, which is a province in north-western India that once was the cradle of well-known Indus Valley Civilisation, and the birthplace of the Vedas and Hindu spiritual-metaphysical sacred literature. Guru Nanak and his nine successors shaped the core beliefs of the world's youngest religion during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Sikh Faith stands apart for its



perennial freshness of socio-psychological attitude, spiritual profundity, scientific temper, and rational-emotional appeal. ‘Sikh’ is a majestic title that suggests ‘simple living and high thinking’—a benefactor, *not* a beggar, who, despite being steeped in Humility, is yet exalted in Spirituality.



Cosmic View of Life: Guru Nanak is the first Prophet who took and propagated a cosmic view of life—piecing together the political, social, and metaphysical imperatives of workaday existence that encompasses the terrestrial and the celestial, the mundane and the exalted, serving it on a platter to the low and weak. He transformed his Revelation into a comprehensible *mantra* in the common folks’ language for ideal living through “*Earn thy living through honest means; share it with the less-privileged; and meditate on God’s Holy Name*”. He identified himself with the lowest among the lowly and demonstrated the efficacy of the Holy Name [NAAM] by personal example. He showed how conflict between opposing ideologies could be resolved through socially-beneficent action. He would customarily take his seat between Bala [Hindu] and Mardana [Muslim], his lifelong companions, and addressed them as ‘Bhai’ [Brother]. He chose to take meals with Bhai Lao, a humble carpenter, much to the

chagrin of chief of the town Malik Bhago by declining his invitation to a grand feast.

Guru Nanak introduced a Cosmic View of Life in religious discourse in a form which, as noted before, I call “Pragmatic Spirituality” rooted in Creative Mysticism that sprang up from his Revelation. Therefore, unlike his many predecessors who had appeared on the Indian horizons as saviours of humankind, the Guru developed and followed a lifestyle that was HOLISTIC in every sense of the word integrating as it admirably demonstrated bodily needs with mind’s aspirations and the soul’s spiritual longings. He discountenanced monasticism of any kind, and hailed the householder’s life as supreme so that Sikhs would never abrogate family and collective responsibilities and end up as benefactors of, not burden on, society. Inherent in this exhortation was palpable strains of altruism far above the lust of selfishness. While stressing this crucial directive principle for leading divine life in the midst of mundane compulsions and psycho-social exigencies, the Guru identified himself with the lowly among the lowliest as an unchanging practical parameter. In this unique approach to fuller living rooted in the prevalence of Holy Name [NAAM], he brought about bloodless revolution—an unprecedented fact of history that has eluded the best of scholars worldwide. *The Jatts [now*

peasants and mega-farmers with enormous landholdings] of Punjab who were originally tribals converted to the Sikh Faith en masse and have since become formidable rulers.

Two examples should suffice to drive home this moot point: (i) Guru Nanak's stay with Bhai Lalo at Sayyadpur, and (ii) *Pauri* [rung of ladder or step of staircase] 18 of *Japuji Sahib*.

(i) His stay with Bhai Lalo: Gurdwara *Khushi*

Bhai Lalo marks the house and the small well (*Khushi*, in Punjabi) belonging to Bhai Lalo, a carpenter by occupation, where Guru Nanak had first met him. Bhai Lalo was born in 1452 at the village of Sayyadpur, at present known as Eminabad, in Pakistan. Bhai Lalo's father's name was Bhai Jagat Ram of the *Ghataora* surname belonging to Ramgarhia community. In those days, carpenters were looked down upon as Hindus of a low caste. They were called *Shudras* [lowest caste in the goddamn societal stratification of Hinduism]. The high-caste Hindus—Brahmins and Khatri—studiously kept away from them. They did not accept food or drink from a low-caste man like Bhai Lalo. When Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana left Sultanpur for their First Odyssey [*Pehli Udasi*], the first village they stopped at was Sayyadpur. Here they went to Bhai Lalo's carpentry shop to meet him. When Bhai Lalo opened the door;

he was surprised to see Guru Nanak. He was at first in such awe that he could do nothing but stare.

A devout and a true disciple of his Master, though poor, he lived a life of utmost honesty and simplicity because he had minimal needs. But more than that he was the one to be contented and happy with whatever little that he possessed and earned. Not caring for creature comforts and dainties of the rich, Guru Nanak went to the humble carpenter's house and lived with him for several days. The Guru preferred and relished the coarse bread and plain water of Lalo because whatever he offered the Master contained God's fear and love. Lalo endeared himself to Guru Nanak because he discerned in his lifestyle the living example of the Sikh Faith's tenets. It was at that time that Malik Bhago, the local Diwan (town chief) of the Pathan governor, had arranged a sacrificial feast and expected holy men of all religions in the town to join and partake of his repast so that he could acquire merit. Malik believed that his *Yajna* (feast) would be incomplete unless all the holy men graced the occasion. The news that a saint was staying at the house of Lalo's house reached Malik Bhago who immediately sent a messenger to escort him to the venue for the feast. The Guru, however, declined to accept the rich man's invitation. As the legend goes,



Guru is said to have demonstrated how Lalo's dry bread contained milk of his honest hard work and Malik's dainty cuisine blood of the poor that he continued exploiting by denying them their rightful earnings.

The unexpected guests were welcomed with utmost courtesy and earnestness. During their three-day stay when they were with Bhai Lalo, while Guru Nanak would stay back with the host, Bhai Mardana chose to go out to explore the town. However, each time he would return crestfallen, and implore his Master to leave the place. His supplication was that he was unable to bear the insults that people of town heaped on Guru Nanak saying, "This aberrant, misguided ascetic is a slur on his high-caste social status by his wilful dealings with two Shudras: a Hindu [Bhai Lalo] and Bhai Mardana [a Muslim]." The Guru's efforts at placating him were all in vain and the holy personage decided to leave the town. On this Bhai Lalo fell at his feet and said he would let them leave after a month. The Guru changed his mind because his host's pleadings had the power of divine love. To take care of Bhai Mardana's problem, he told him to go to Talwandi. "What shall I tell the people out there about you..." he queried. The Guru said, "Whatever you have heard people here say about me, you should tell your hosts in Talwandi without any reservation." Guru

Nanak's stay under such circumstances with awful social censure demonstrates the inviolable veracity of divine message that "All humans are equal as children of ONE Lord God." It plainly testified to what he had been saying, "*Neechaan andar neech jaat neechi hoon ati neech...*" [I am a lowly creature among the lowliest caste...] He was no ordinary messenger of God's priceless message. His proclamations that sprang up from the artesian wells of his Revelation were pulsating demonstrations of Pragmatic Spirituality rooted in a holistic personage which remained untarnished even in thick of materialism of the mortal world that pollutes as rapidly as you breathe.

(ii) *Eighteenth Pauri* [rung of ladder or step of staircase] of *Japuji Sahib*:

Here Guru Nanak Dev [who is the greatest Prophet of the World so far] makes out a classic case of Humility of which he was himself a veritable personification. His distinction lies in the signal fact that all his thoughts, words, and deeds which constituted his inspiring lifestyle never saw in any situation or under any circumstance even the slightest strain of self-importance. All his averments were dedicated to Lord God and he took no credit for anything that he thought, spoke or wrote, and did.

Countless are the purblind fools who
 have relapsed into folly
 Besides those living off others' flesh through
 thievery and dishonesty
 The innumerable tyrants who by brute
 force are ruling
 The impetuous cut-throats and merciless
 murderers loitering
 The abounding sinners who leave behind
 a long trail of sin
 Numberless liars who spread falsehood
 day out 'n' day in
 Perverts self-abased in filth beyond all count,
 living or dead
 Myriad slanderers burdened by others'
 calumny remain unsaid




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, the Guru 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 his exalted spiritual status and stature so extremely disparagingly!

Uncompromising Monotheism: It cannot be emphasised enough that Guru Nanak received the Message of God by His grace through Revelation by virtue of which he injected into popular notions of Monotheism a perennial vitality and an uncompromising conviction steeped in Humility as the rarest of rare divine dispensation. His *Bani* is thus soul-resurrecting and consciousness-exalting utterance sprung from the artesian wells of direct knowledge within his being that comes only from actual seeing, never by speculation and ratiocinative cerebration, God's divine effulgence. Not once in his 974 *Shabads* (hymns) occurs any doubt to show that what he is saying is a figment of his own imagination. Unfortunately, this truth has been eluding all genres of historians, scholars, and researchers who end up suggesting that *Nanak Bani* descended in his Revelation is a rehashing of Vedic metaphysics and Islamic religious thought as ingenious psycho-spiritual syncretism. They blatantly overlook the historic fact that his own proclamation is substantiated by the Sacred Formula that he put forth in a



form never before and since his times attempted by any god man: *Ik Onkar* — prefixing of the digit “1” before the written symbol “Omkar” or “Oankar” or “Onkar” is unique in the annals of World Religions.



Divine Distinction of *Ik Oankar*: Two sacred words “Om” and “Omkar” had existed in the Indian religious tradition for many centuries but the prefix “1” made the latter unique, universal, and timeless. The word “OM”, sacred though it is, is at bottom a primal sound which it is hard to accept as an equivalent of God. The word “OMKAR”, a later addition to the prevalent sacred words, says much more through the addition of the suffix “KAR” suggesting it to be an appellation of the Divine Doer who has the absolute autocratic powers of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction. But the problem with it was that it tended to drift from Monotheism into Polytheism and many other “isms” as was typical in the case of Hinduism. Originally called the *Sanatana Dharma* it pertained to “Brahman” of the Vedas—an Abstract Principle of Truth that one finds hard to identify with. Hence its incredible multiplication into 330-million-strong pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses that have found their way into Hindu mythology and thence into the hearts of countless Hindus inhabiting the

globe, so much so that it is impossible to evict them from the “Collective Unconscious” even by the awesome weaponry of science and technology.

Numeral “1” spells God’s Inviolable Unicity: Since Guru Nanak embarked upon his mission of spreading God’s Word internationally, he at first identified himself with the lowest among the lowly so that he could bring it to the doorstep of the illiterate, and ignorant masses on a platter in their language, unlike in Sanskrit that the scheming Brahmins had designated as “*Deva Bhasha*” [Language of the Gods] to their selfish advantage for exploiting the low-caste teeming millions with a view to preserving their supremacy throughout the chequered history of Humanity that had been fated to be born and brought up in India. The Guru, therefore, stressed the inviolable-indivisible Unicity of God by the Numeral “1” and presented Him as the Supreme Divine Being, as One without a Second, to possess the absolute and autocratic powers of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction obviating the need to delegate any task to an assistant, a regent, or a subordinate deity such as Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh. The word ‘Unicity’ is a necessary coinage to connote ‘inviolable-indivisible ONENESS’ [it does not exist in the English dictionary] in an attempt to distinguish it from the connotation of the word ‘Unity’ that

has an intrinsic infirmity to drift from ‘the state of being one; oneness’ into ‘totality as combining all its parts into one’. Therefore, ‘Unity’ is a plural, with minimum two!


The Numeral “1” demonstrates, albeit without knowledge even of the most learned and the pedantic, that it alone has value—and all other digits have none. The psycho-spiritual logic that transcends the ratiocinative cerebration of mathematics is that Lord God in His indivisible singularity is WHOLE among myriad creatures and forms of creation which by His own Will are PARTS such as tiny sparks of Divine Light—an incredible, unimaginable, awesome Effulgence. All digits are sum-totals of 1’s which have been given different names for convenience of human comprehension. For example, ‘9’ the highest digit at the culmination of single-digit numbers is, at bottom, nine 1’s. In another way, in which you could appreciate this conundrum is this: Any group of 10’s, 100’s, 1000’s, and so on till infinity begins with a digit that invariably contains the Numeral “1”. Extremely large figures are written with 10 as a basic figure which is raised to the power ‘n’ until infinity. You may have any number of Zeroes but they have no value whatsoever until the Numeral “1” is placed on their left side; putting it on their right side reduces their power decimally. Thus the selfsame Source of all Creation which Man

alone, as a Conscious Creature, could discern, being “ONE”, all creatures are “Zeroes” unless they remain connected with it. In this light, the statement that Man is not *perfect* is absurd.

Theory of Evolution tells us that Man has reached his present stage after millions of years of the *perfecting* process. He is perfect; therefore, he functions as *Homo sapiens*. But deep down within himself he is unhappy because he feels he is not complete in the sense of ‘Whole’. In this light, the Cosmos is a setting for God’s Divine Sport in which Man is an indispensable actor, though lured by the mind-boggling kaleidoscope of forms, colours, and types created by Matter [*Maya*] he invariably forgets *The Source* until he is neck-deep in ‘*Bhavjal*’ [Ocean of Transitoriness]. Taking a cosmic view of life, Guru Nanak established the Sikh Faith based on “*Grihsta-Udaas*” in sharp contradistinction to “*Grihsta-Tyaga*” as propagated and perpetuated by Hinduism. His reason was that Household alone could offer all the pleasures of living while the Householder remains committed to his family and social responsibilities unlike a recluse who becomes a burden on society. The Householder performs his social activities as duty [*Dharma*] without getting bogged down in the rigmarole of relationships which cleverly reinforce human bondage rather than free the spirit to stay connected to *THE SOURCE*: Lord God.



God as Primal Person: Guru Nanak thus describes God as Primal Person [not an abstract principle of truth] both in His *Nirguna* [without attributes] and *Sarguna* [with attributes] Being. While underscoring His unique powers of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction as Self-Existing Primal Person, the Guru stresses God's inviolable-indivisible Unicity by the Numeral "1" as a starting point of the soul-uplifting *Mantra* [Master Word]. Thus 'OM' is the Primal Sound associated with God's Immaculate, Impeccable, Untaintable, Incorruptible Purity, and 'KAR' is the active principle operating the three complementary primary functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction.



Omkar or Oankar: In the light of the foregoing exposition, when the Guru proclaims "Ik Omkar" [Numeral "1" should be pronounced as "Ik" as in Punjabi, *not* "Ek" as in Hindi and Urdu], he makes an uncompromising revelatory, *not* rehashed, averment that God is One, and He performs the three functions of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction unaided [Many Sikh scholars use the spelling 'Oankar' in preference to 'Omkar' in a vain bid to show that the former Sacred Word is new, without a past—this is being unfair and unjust to history which, in my considered opinion, belongs to all humankind, *not* Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists,

Jains, Jews, Christians, and others]. Be that as it may, the Guru then reveals *Truth* as God's Primary Attribute in the sense of real, *not* imaginary as in mythology. However, in my view, this statement despite its novelty yet tends to sound 'abstract' much like what the word 'Brahman' in Vedic literature suggests. The next word in the *Mool Mantra* [Creedal Proclamation] is 'NAAM' which has been combined with 'Sat' to make 'Sat-Naam' that in popular parlance is accepted as God's Name. For me, it has an altogether different connotation as I will presently attempt to show.

Reconciling Immanence with Transcendence:

To infuse pulsating vitality into what appears to be an abstract principle of truth Guru Nanak says: *Ik Omkar* is 'SAT' but let us 'name' Him [try to identify His comprehensible attributes—His *Sarguna* Traits], and goes on to spell out—*Karta Purkh* [Creative Person] who is *Nirbhau* [Fearless], *Nirvair* [Without Enmity], *Akaal* [Beyond Time] *Moorat* [literally, 'likeness' or 'image'; but I prefer 'Personage' so as not to confuse it with 'idol' because 'idolatry' is forbidden in the Sikh Faith], *Ajoooni* [Unborn], *Saibhang* [Self-Existent] *Gur Parsad* [The Spiritual Preceptor's Grace]. The last expression is popularly interpreted to mean "(God is) realisable by the Guru's grace—literally, divine sacrament",

but I feel that though Guru Nanak is proclaiming the advent of a new religion he is stressing the fact that he is doing so *not* as a wilful act of personal glorification but by the Grace [Divine Sacrament] of his Spiritual Preceptor—the *Guru* [who is none other than God Himself]. I think there could not be a better proof that Guru Nanak is sharing his Revelation; *not* concocting an alternative mythology. Following this line of thinking, I have rendered in English as follows the *Mool Mantra* with which Guru Nanak’s Japuji launches the Sikh Faith.

THE SEED-WORD

[*Mool Mantra*]

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

Pragmatic Spirituality: Guru Nanak ushered an all-inclusive higher order of civilisation containing a complete set of moral and spiritual guidelines for shouldering religious, social, and political responsibilities so that even the masses could lead a holistic life. His was a bloodless Revolution that sought to demolish the hegemony as much of the Brahmanical priest craft as of the tyranny of the feudal lords. He sought to create an equal and just society for the downtrodden, humble, and the weak. Throughout his life Guru Nanak practised the virtues of equality and dignity, and, by his personal example, exhorted all humankind to do so. This was God’s sacrament given to them irrespective of their perverted practices, caste structures, gender biases, social maladies, and geo-political affiliations, and unending ideological conflicts. In sharp contrast to the centuries-old customs and practices, the Guru accorded in society all women equal status with men. In sum, Pragmatic Spirituality steeped in Divine Grace is the Directive Principle of workaday existence that Guru Nanak offered as priceless gift to all Humanity.

Strict Ethical Tests: Guru Nanak laid down strict ethical tests for his disciples emphasising that “*Truth is higher than everything. But higher still is truthful living.*” Accordingly, “*Kirat Karo; Vand Chhako; and Naam Japo*” became the



tenets of the Sikh Faith. Guru Nanak gave God's message to the masses in their mother tongue, Punjabi; using a script called *Gurmukhi* [literally, from the Guru's mouth: the script using Arabic-Persian alphabet is called '*Shahmukhi*' and the Muslims in Pakistan use it for written Punjabi] was developed by the Second Master Guru Angad Dev (31 March 1504 - 28 March 1552) from the existing one. Guru Nanak also founded the institution of *Sangat*, congregation of devotees in worship and in the singing of *Shabads* [hymns] and for listening to religious discourses. These congregations also provided the people a platform to exchange views on common problems, and generate a feeling of camaraderie and national consciousness.

Free Community Kitchen: One of the hallmarks of Guru Nanak's *Dharamsaals* was the *Langar*, Free Community Kitchen, where all devotees were served free food irrespective of caste, creed, colour, or gender. This heroic initiative was revolutionary in that the Sikhs' contributions in cash and kind, besides service in the preparation of food and serving it to the *Sangats* seated together on mats laid on the floor, was entirely voluntary. *Langar* facilely ended the centuries-old social differentiation and discrimination based on the Hindu caste system thereby fostering a spirit of camaraderie and fellowship among human beings.

In his lifetime, Guru Nanak was able to create a community of people who had much more in common amongst themselves than with the communities they originally belonged to. Khushwant Singh, the famous Sikh author, has proposed that "*this ideal gave birth to collective Punjabi consciousness and Punjabi nationalism as distinct from everything else*".

Perhaps, Guru Nanak's greatest contribution to the consolidation of the Sikh Faith was installation of Guru Angad as his most suitable and fit successor to carry on his divine mission. Guru Nanak passed away peacefully in 1539 at the age of 70 leaving behind many zealous and admiring disciples.

Creative Mysticism: Sikh Faith or *Sikhi* is an uncompromisingly monotheistic religion that refuses to recognise the Brahmanical priesthood and forbids magic, idolatry, and ceremonial visits to Hindu places of pilgrimage [*Tirathas*]. I use Sikh Faith or *Sikhi* in stubborn preference to *Sikhism* because I am convinced that the suffix "ism" devalues irreparably the intrinsic beauty and bounty of the world's youngest religion which, by any standard of discourse, stands apart on the divine power of its founder Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation. In my second PhD earned in 2000, I have established on the comparative method and studious analysis that

Sikhi is an advanced version among World Religions by virtue of the founder's cosmic view of life and his unruffled, dauntless courage to put it to the profoundest of scientific and metaphysical investigation and scrutiny. I have coined a new term "Creative Mysticism" for it because it transcends the nature, scope, and applicability of centuries-old disciplines like Metaphysics, Mythology, the Muse—even Mysticism that has hitherto been regarded as 'religion of the élite'. The discerning readers will agree with me that Creative Mysticism, exclusively descriptive of the Sikh Faith, has made way for Holistic Humanism in which all needs of Body, Mind, and Soul are fulfilled by *Kirat Karo*, *Vand Chhako*, and *Naam Japo*—simultaneously and sumptuously.

God's Messenger: During his four Missionary Travels [popularly known as *Udasis*], Guru Nanak did not face any problem with the political establishment of Sikandar Lodhi, the ruler of Punjab and Delhi. Sikandar died in 1517 and left the empire to his son Ibrahim Lodhi who was not a particularly strong leader. Sensing a good opportunity, Babur, a Central Asian conqueror and a direct descendent of Genghis Khan, repeatedly attacked the plains of Northern India. In 1526, at the First Battle of Panipat, Babur famously defeated and killed Ibrahim

Lodhi and established the foundation of Mughal Empire in India.

Quintessence of Guru Nanak's Message:

The most famous divine utterances attributed to Guru Nanak are: There is only ONE God without a second—omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient—and that all human beings can have direct access to Him with no need of getting into the rigmarole of meaningless rituals, and without the intervention of misleading priests. His most radical social exhortations denounced the caste system and stressed that all human beings are equal, regardless of their castes, creeds, colours, gender, self-avowed nationalities, cultural prejudices, and ethnic eccentricities.

DIVINE LIGHT DAWNS ON NANAK

Nanak was a child prodigy with a difference. God had endowed him with a contemplative bent of mind and rational thinking about the whys and wherefores of the phenomenal world vis-à-vis the world of spiritual realities. At the age of seven, he learnt Hindi and Sanskrit. He surprised his teachers with the sublimity of his intuitive knowledge of things divine—and his innate ability to uplift the concrete to abstract, the mundane to the celestial, and to relate the two with the corroborative evidence available to



the discerning during workaday existence. On turning thirteen, he learned Persian [now called Iranian] and Sanskrit and became the most learned young man in the region at the age of 16. He was married to Mata Sulakhni who gave birth to two sons: Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das. In November 1504, as noted before, Guru Nanak's elder sister Bebe Nanaki took him to Sultanpur Lodhi where her husband Jai Ram got him the job of a storekeeper in the *Modikhana* [provisions store] of the local Nawab, Daulat Khan Lodhi.

Every day, Guru Nanak would get up early morning and go to take bath in *Vain* [also spelled as '*Bein*'] a rivulet, near Sultanpur Lodhi. After daily ablutions, he would religiously say his prayers. However, in August 1507 at the age of 38, his ritual bath turned out to be a turning point in his life. He waded down into deep water and then dived while Bhai Mardana was sitting on the bank. After long time had passed and Guru Nanak had not come out of the river, suddenly noticing the small pile of clothes lying on the riverbank shocked Mardana's awareness into a whirl of mounting anxiety. He ran to the bank, and scanned the still waters, calling out aloud his friend's name but no reply broke the breezy morning's quietude. The river flowed by in nonchalant calmness, unruffled by any swimmer's movements. When Mardana shouted at the top of his voice, fearing that the Guru had

drowned, and soon the whole village was on tenterhooks and the people in utter desperation searched all morning, spreading nets in the flowing water, going several miles downstream and searching the opposite bank for any sign of the holy personage but there was absolutely no sign of him. One by one some, sooner than others, went back to the village convinced that Guru Nanak had drowned. However, Mardana and Bebe Nanaki waited, helplessly watching the river flow by, while the river of agony flowed in tears down their own cheeks.

Two days passed in heart-rending despair but amazingly, on the third day, without fuss or surprise, Guru Nanak surfaced from out of the river, well and alive. He sat on the riverbank, with water dripping, tight-lipped, and contemplating. He seemed absorbed by some mystery or inscrutable secret, and uttered not a word. As the good news that 'Guru Nanak's back' spread like wild fire through the village, Mardana, Bebe Nanaki, and villagers gathered on the site of the surrealistic occurrence.

The crowd in its puzzled concern wondered what had happened to the Guru, he broke his inordinate silence with this strange utterance: Guru Nanak spoke: "*There is neither Hindu nor Musalman ... Whose path shall I follow? Then declared solemnly: I shall follow God's path.*" This cryptic proclamation is widely interpreted

to mean that Guru Nanak had heard God's mystic call to dedicate his life to the service of Humanity. During the period he was presumed drowned, God had summoned the *Guru* to his presence and entrusted him the task of preaching the Divine Appellation (that the Guru called 'NAAM') to the world gone astray.

Some of the crowd drifted away, and went back to work shrugging in disbelief. Others were puzzled about Guru Nanak's mysterious disappearance, more so by his unnerving utterance. Mardana was just glad to see his friend alive again. Guru Nanak could not speak to them about where he had been for the past three days, or what he had experienced, but he was different—he was incredibly different. He went straight to his house, and took out most of his possessions to give away to the poor and the needy.

According to the Revelation recorded in *Puratan Janamsakhi*, the Guru himself confirms that the Almighty Father had commanded him to go to the world and sing His praises. Sometime after this mystic experience, Guru Nanak wrote: "*I was a jobless minstrel; the Merciful Lord has taken me in his employment...*"

After three days when Guru Nanak reappeared from *Vain*, some people saw a halo around his head. Some people say that Guru Nanak's Guruship started with his reappearance from the river water. There are three entities in

Sikh Faith or *Sikhi*: God, Guru, and *Gurbani* (Divine Word uttered by the *Guru*). There is only ONE God; God sent his emissary, the *Guru*, who is embodiment of Divine Light. God delivered the Divine Word (*Gurbani*) through the *Guru*.


Harbinger of *Gurbani*: Without Guru Nanak, there would have been no *Gurbani*. *Guru* [Spiritual Preceptor] is the channel through whom *Gurbani* [Guru's Word] is delivered. Therefore, when, at the age of seven, the first divine message that he delivered to his teacher (Raag Asa Mahalla 1, SGGS, Patti Likhi, Ang 432) had embodied the truism "coming events cast their shadows before" and thus he had to be the *Guru*. Before disappearing in *Vein* River, because a lot of *Gurbani* had already been delivered by him he, indeed, was a born *Guru* and his *Guruship*, transcending ceremonial investiture then extant in the Indian religious tradition, had started from the day of his birth.

When he was asked by the Siddhas who his Guru was, Guru Nanak had replied that God Himself was his Guru:

"Unfathomable and Infinite is Lord God
It's He who alone had acted as
Nanak's Guru"

[SGGS, Page 599]





Introduction to Islam and Sufism: Early in life, Nanak was introduced to the most esteemed writings of the Muslims, and had his initiation in their principles and Sufism. The stimulus from these sources was so great that he grew so much fond of books as to utilise his leisure time in the translation of maxims as had made the deepest impression on his mind. This exercise helped him in developing the idiom of his mother tongue, Punjabi. Little by little he strung those loose sentences, put them in order, and converted them into divine verses. The net gain was tremendous. Though still young, he was able to shake off those prejudices of *Gentilism* which he had imbibed with his mother's milk, so much so that he was transformed into quite another man.

Gentilism, or paganism, is derived from 'Gentile'—a word used to address anyone who is not a Jew, or not a Christian, or a Mormon. A pagan is a heathen: one who is not a Christian, Jew, or Muslim. However, more recently, the connotation refers to one who has no religion; also one who sets a high value on sensual pleasures. Hence 'Paganism' is looked down upon as a way of life of the barbarians; uncivilised brutes.

MISSIONARY TRAVELS OR UDASIS

In 1496 CE, although married and having a family, Guru Nanak embarked upon Missionary

Travels [*Udasis*] to spread in India and abroad the Glory of the Holy Name [*NAAM*] that he had received in his Revelation and on which he eventually founded the Sikh Faith. He discountenanced *Tyaga*, the path of renunciation, and *Yoga* [psychosomatic workouts] for self-realisation, rejected the 'inviolable' authority of the Vedas, and eradicated the centuries-old Hindu caste system from among his followers. Instead, he commended the leading of a householder's life (*Grihsta*) avoiding the marshland of materialistic pursuits and ill-earned prosperity. He introduced the triune formula of simple living and high thinking: *Kirat Karo* [Earn your livelihood by honest means]; *Vand Chhako* [Share your earnings with the needy and poor]; and *Naam Japo* [Meditate on the Holy Name as your strict spiritual regimen].

In his *First Udasi*, Guru Nanak covered the east of India and returned home after spending about six years. He started from Sultanpur in 1499, and went to his village Talwandi to meet and inform his parents about his long journey. The old parents wanted comfort and protection from their young son and persuaded him not to go. However, he convinced them of his divine mission by saying that it was God's command that he must travel in various directions in the country and abroad to spread His message to innumerable people who were in

dire need of spiritual solace, love, and salvation. The Guru pleaded with his parents for their blessings to undertake the onerous task, “There is a call from Heaven that I must go and I ask for your blessings.” With their permission he set out on his first travel of God-assigned Humane Mission.

Most Travelled God’s Messenger: Guru Nanak is the most travelled Messenger of God in the world. Most of his journeys were made on foot accompanied by lifelong companion Bhai Mardana. He travelled in all four directions—North, East, West, and South—through uncharted, inhospitable tracts of land. He is believed to have travelled more than 28,000 kilometres in five major national and international tours from 1499 to 1524. In secular terms, he is the most travelled man in the world next only to Ibn Battuta (25 February 1304-1368 or 1369). He was a Muslim Moroccan scholar and explorer who widely travelled the mediaeval world. His main reason to travel was to go on a Hajj or a Pilgrimage to Mecca, to fulfil the obligation of the Fifth Pillar of Islam. But his travelling went on for about 29 years during which he visited an equivalent of 44 modern countries such as were then mostly under the governments of Muslim leaders of the World of Islam, or “*Dar al-Islam*”.


Guru Nanak’s Times: There was widespread confusion in the society of Guru Nanak’s times in which the prevalent views concerning Spiritual Realities were conflicting because the priests, Pandits, Qazis, Mullas, and other religious leaders of Hinduism and Islam were continually at daggers drawn in desperate attempts at one-upmanship to prove the supremacy of their own faith. Guru Nanak who had identified himself with the lowliest of the lowly was deeply moved by the sad plight of the hapless people. The world suffering from mutual hatred, fanaticism, falsehood, and hypocrisy had sunk in wickedness and sin. Determined to bring God’s message of love and peace to the misled masses he set out on his Missionary Travels [*Udasis*] in 1499, accompanied by Bhai Mardana who remained his constant companion until his death in 1520. For one year, he discoursed with the people in and around his home. However, in 1500, he embarked upon his First Udasi [1500-1506] and covered the east of India before returning home after six years.

Given below is a summary of the confirmed places that Guru Nanak had visited during his missionary travels.

FIRST UDASI (1500-1506 CE) lasted about seven years and covered the following towns



and regions: Sultanpur, Tulamba (modern Makaddampur, district Multan), Panipat, Delhi, Banaras (Varanasi), Nanakmata (district Nainital, Uttar Pradesh), Tanda Vanjara (district Rampur), Kamrup (Assam), Asa Desh (Assam), Saidpur (modern Aminabad, Pakistan), Pasrur (Pakistan), Sialkot (Pakistan).



First Stop at Aminabad: After receiving the permission and blessings of his parents, Guru Nanak embarked on his first Udasi, accompanied by Bhai Mardana. Their first stop was at Sayyadpur, now known as Aminabad, where they met a poor carpenter named Lalo. The Master looked at poor Lalo graciously and he was endowed with Divine Love; and Lo, he was a blessed man. By his infinite mercy for the honest and poor, the Guru graciously chose to stay as a guest with the carpenter for some time. The news reached the chief of the town Malik Bhago that a holy person was staying with Lalo. Malik Bhago, a corrupt and dishonest man, had amassed lots of wealth through unfair means, and threw a sumptuous feast for all holy men including the Guru who politely declined his invitation. The Malik then made special arrangements for the Guru, and requested him to come and dine at his residence. On receiving the Guru, Malik Bhago said, “O holy man, I have prepared so many dishes for you, but you

are staying with a poor carpenter and eating his dry bread. Why don’t you stay with me?” Guru Nanak replied, “I cannot eat your food because it has been made with money sucked from the poor through unfair means, while Lalo’s dry bread is made from the hard-earned money.”

Encounter with Malik Bhago: Puzzled at this unexpected curious comment, the town’s chief asked the holy personage to prove his point. On this, the Guru sent for a loaf of bread from Lalo’s house; then, holding it one hand, held Malik Bhago’s delicacy in the other, and squeezed both. To everyone’s befuddlement, milk came out from Lalo’s dry bread while blood dripped from Malik Bhago’s buttered bread. Completely unnerved and shaken by his guilt, he asked for forgiveness. The Guru told him to distribute his ill-gotten wealth among the poor and thenceforth lead an honest life. With Guru’s blessings, Malik Bhago was re-born into a life of honesty and fairness.

SECOND UDASI (1506-1513 CE) lasted about seven years, and covered the following towns and regions: Dhanasri Valley, Sangladeep (Ceylon or Sri Lanka).

THIRD UDASI (1514-1518 CE) had duration of about five years, and covered the following towns and regions: Kashmir, Sumer Parbat, Nepal,

Tashkent, Sikkim, Tibet. Guru Nanak is also believed to have gone to China. However, collection of evidence to support this claim is underway.

On his Third Udasi towards the west of India, Guru Nanak reached Pakpattan (Ajodhan) where he met Sheikh Brahm who was the eleventh in succession to Baba Farid, whose *Bani* is included in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The Guru had discussion with Sheikh Brahm on diverse subjects. During the discourse, the Guru stated:

Thou art the tablet, O Lord, Thou art the
pen, and Thou art
also the writing,
Speak of the one God; O Nanak, why should
there be
second.”

[SGGS, Page 1291]



The *Sheikh* asked the Guru to explain: “You say, ‘There is only ONE God, why should there be a second?’, and I (*Sheikh*) say:

“There is one Lord and two ways;
which shall I adopt, and which one reject?”

The Guru replied:
“There is ONE Lord and one way;
you should adopt one and reject the other.”



In a Var (like *Asa di Var*) there has to be two beings; and the *Sheikh* asked the Guru to let him hear a strain in praise of the ONE God. “My idea is”, said the Sheikh, “that adoration cannot be performed without two beings, that is, God and the Prophet. Let me see whom thou makest man’s intercessor.”

Upon this the Guru asked Mardana to play the rebeck and he uttered the first *Slok* and *Pauri* of *Asa di Var*:

SLOK

“I am a sacrifice, Nanak, to my Guru a
hundred times a day
who without any delay made demigods
out of man

Nanak, they who, very clever in their own
estimation, think
not of the Guru

Shall be left like spurious sesames in a
harvested field
they shall be left in the field, saith Nanak
without an owner

The wretches may even bear fruit and
flower but shall
contain ashes within their bodies



PAURI

God Himself created the world, and formed
Himself into
Name,
He created Nature by His power; seated He
beheld His
work with delight.
O Creator, Thou art the Giver; being pleased
Thou bestowest
and practisest kindness.
Thou knowest all things; Thou givest and
takest life with a
word.
Seated Thou beholdest Thy work with
delight.”

[SGGS, Pages 462-63]



The Sheikh, then, wanted a knife: *“Give me such a knife that those who are killed with it shall be acceptable to God. With the ordinary knife the lower animals are killed. If a man’s throat be cut with this knife, it becomes carrion.”*

The Guru replied in affirmative:

Truth is the knife, truth is pure steel
its fashion is altogether incomparable
Put it on the hone of the Word
and fit it into the scabbard of merit
if anyone be bled with that, O Sheikh,
The blood of avarice will be seen to issue forth
If man be slaughtered with it, he shall
go to meet God
O Nanak, and be absorbed in the sight of Him

[SGGS, Page 956]



On hearing this, the Sheikh raised his head in amazement and said, *“Well done. O Nanak, there is no difference between God and thee. Kindly bless me so that I too may be on good terms with Him.”*

The Guru replied, *“Sheikh Brahm, God will cause thy ship to arrive safe.”*

The Sheikh requested the Guru to give him the firm promise of this. The Guru complied and blessed him with salvation.

According to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, the first nine *Pauris* (stanzas) of *Asa di Var* were uttered by the Guru during discussion with Sheikh Brahm and other fifteen *Pauris* of *Asa di Var* were uttered for Duni Chand Dhuper of Lahore.

Afterwards, the Guru proceeded to Multan, Uch, Sakhar and reached Lakhpat, where a

Gurdwara stands marking the memory of his visit. Then, he reached Kuriani where a tank is called after his name. He visited Miani, about fifty miles west of the city of Karachi and visited the temples of Hindus and the mosques of Muslims in the area. Near Hinglaj, there is a *Dharmsala* [originally called *Dharamsaal*] that commemorates the Guru's visit to this place. From there he boarded a ship for Arabia.

FOURTH UDASI (1519-1521 CE) lasted about three years, and covered the following towns and regions: Iraq, Mecca, Turkey and the Arab countries. It is said that in Syria there is a mosque named 'Mosque of Wali-e-Hind' near the mosque of Baba Farid. Guru Nanak is also believed to have gone to Africa. However, collection of evidence to support this claim is underway.

Guru Nanak went to Mecca during Fourth Udasi, accompanied by Bhai Mardana. Prophet Muhammad designated *Mecca* (his birthplace) as the Holy City of Islam and the direction (*Qibla*: in India the direction is westward) in which all Muslims should offer their prayers wherever they be in the world. Since no non-Muslim is allowed to go there on pilgrimage Guru Nanak had to feign to be one to gain access. He put on *Ihram*, unstitched dress worn by *Hajis* or Muhammedans who went on pilgrimage in those times, carried a Faqir's staff

in his hand, a collection of his hymns under his arm, with a jug (*Lota*) for ablutions, thus he was in the guise of a *Haji*. This is considered to be the last and longest *Udasi* to the headquarters of Islam. During three of the Four Udasis he had travelled to famous religious places in South India, East India, and North India, discussing, in the light of his Revelation, the nature and impact of Spiritual Realities during workaday existence and showing the path of righteousness to one and all regardless of castes, creeds, colours, ethnicities, and geo-political prejudices.

The story of Ibn Battuta's travel adventures spread over 30 years is lengthy. Given here is a brief account of his travels just to show that he was the most widely travelled individual. Therefore, more than anything else, it is the duration of his travels that is worth noting with reference to Guru Nanak's odysseys. Having spent a month in Gao city, Ibn Battuta set off with a large caravan for the oasis of Takedda. Situated in Mali Gao city is the capital of the Gao Region. The city is located on the River Niger, 200 miles east-south-east of Timbuktu on the left bank at the junction with the Tilemsi Valley on the African Continent. On his journey across the desert, he received a message from the Sultan of Morocco commanding him to return home. He set off for Sijilmasa in September 1353, accompanying a large caravan transporting



600 female slaves, and arrived back in Morocco early in 1354. Ibn Battuta led a complete life while travelling. He studied and prayed; practised law; and had astonishing adventures. He married at least 10 times and left children growing up all over Afro-Eurasia.

Following inscription appears on Guru Nanak's memorial in Turkey:

In Arabic/Persian/Turkish languages
(Transliterated in Gurmukhi Script)

ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਜਮਾਂ ਹਿੰਦ ਲਤ ਅਬਦ ਅਲ ਮਜੀਦ ਨਾਨਕ।
(Jehangir jaman hind lat abd al majid Nanak)

✱

Meanings in Punjabi
ਜਮਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ, ਹਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਬੰਦਾ, ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ।
(jamaanay da maalik, hind da banda, rab da
Nanak)

✱

Meanings in English
Lord of the time, citizen of India, Nanak, the
man of God

✱

NOTE: The rest of the long inscription is not legible and is still to be deciphered. However, the date 1267 Hijri (1850 CE) in the crown and at the bottom line of the monument is quite legible.

Sajjan Thug: According to *Puratan Janamsakhi* [Old Hagiographic Account of Guru Nanak's Life], before Guru Nanak turned towards east, he went to Tolumba (now known as Makaddampur in West Pakistan) and met Sajjan Thug who always wore a white dress, displayed his rosary and thus posed to be a holy man. He had built a *Mandir* and a *Masjid* in the courtyard of his residence. His practice was to invite wayfarers to his home to rest for the night when he would rob their goods and money and sometimes kill them. The Guru went and stayed with him for the night but when he did not go to bed early, Sajjan was a bit too nervous to perform his nefarious act of robbing. Sajjan asked the Guru to take rest and sleep but the Guru replied, "I am God's minstrel and do not go to sleep till He commands me to do so." The Guru then asked Mardana to play the *Rabaab* and he sang a heart-rending hymn [SGGS, page 729].

First Historical Gurdwara: When Sajjan listened to the divine melody, he realised that the Guru's words were actually addressed to him. Upon this, he made his obeisance, fell at the Guru's feet, and prayed to him to pardon his sins. The Guru said, "Sajjan, in the Sovereignty of God, grace is obtained by two things: (i) Open confession and (ii) Reparation for wrong." Sajjan stood speechless in submission, and was asked

to give all his ill-gotten wealth to the poor. He obeyed the command and became a follower of the Guru after receiving *Charan Pahul* [initiation ceremony in which the novitiate drinks water touched by being poured over the spiritual preceptor's toes]. It is said that the First Historical *Gurdwara* [Sikh temple] was raised on the spot to commemorate the episode.

Guru Nanak at Hardwar: Hardwar is one of the key Hindu pilgrimage places on the bank of river Ganges. It was a Baisakhi day and the pilgrims had got up early in the morning and bathed in the river. As the sun came out, they started throwing water towards the sun. When Guru Nanak asked what they were doing, one priest replied, "We are offering water to our dead ancestors in the region of the Sun to quench their thirst."

Hearing their strange rationale, the Guru turned his back and started throwing water towards the west. The pilgrims laughed and ridiculing him asked what he was doing. He replied, "I am watering my fields in my village in the Punjab." The priest asked, "How can your water reach such a distance?" The Guru retorted, "How far your ancestors are from here?" One of them replied, "In the other world." The Guru reasoned, "If water cannot reach my fields which are about four hundred miles away from here, how can it reach your ancestors who are no longer on


this earth?" Receiving instant illumination the crowd stood in speechless awe. The Guru educated them against superstitions, false rituals, idol worship, penances, renunciation, and monastic life. He stressed that only ONE God, the Formless, was to be worshipped by singing paeans to His glory and grandeur—the right path to the realisation of truth and enlightenment. **Gurdwara Nanakwara** situated in Hardwar on the bank of the river Ganges now stands as a memorial to the spiritual transformation of those Hindus who were fortunate enough to be present there.

Guru Nanak at Gorakhmata: After Hardwar, the Guru took his route towards Gorakhmata, about twenty miles north of Pilibhit, and reached the place via Joshi Math and Almora, which was then ruled by the members of Chand family who used to sacrifice human beings to please the Hindu goddess Chandi. Guru Nanak showed them the path of truth and thus stopped them from massacring innocent people as part of their weird worship.

From there he reached Gorakhmata which was the abode of Yogis (also spelled Jogis) of Gorakhnath clan. These Jogis had supernatural powers called *Ridhi-Sidhi*. Their blessings were eagerly sought by all householders who took pains to avoid their curses at all costs. Just as their reputation had spread far and wide, these



Jogis had also heard about Guru Nanak's divine endowment. On reaching there, he was thus received with great courtesy and reverence, and they cordially invited him to adopt their cult, wear their garb and join them as a Jogi. The Guru explained to them that the life of seclusion which was not in the service of their fellow beings was worthless. The Guru sang the following *Shabad* [hymn]:



Religion is not what you see in a
patched gown
Nor it resides in a Jogi's staff
Not even in ashes-besmeared body
Neither in earrings worn, nor in a shaven head
Nor the blowing of conch-shell
makes up religion
Abiding pure amid the world's impurities
One shall find the way of religion
Mere verbiage does not constitute religion
The religious is he who looks upon all
men as equal
Religion neither lies in visiting tombs or
cremation grounds
Nor does religion dwell in sitting in postures
of contemplation
Religion consists not in wandering in
foreign countries

Or in ritualistic bathing at places of
pilgrimage
Abiding pure amid the world's impurities
One shall find the way of religion
On meeting a true Guru doubt is dispelled, and
Wanderings of the mind done away with
It's downpour of nectar, and
In the soothing ecstasy of music
One discovers happiness within oneself
Abiding pure amid the world's impurities
One shall find the way of religion
Practise such religion, Nanak, in the
midst of life
Without forgetting death
When your conch-shell sounds
Without being blown shall you
Attain immaculate dignity
For, abiding pure amid the world's impurities
One shall find the way of religion

[SGGS, Page 730]



On hearing this *Shabad*, the Yogis made obeisance to Guru Nanak whose discourse was so powerful and effective that Gorakhmata soon became **Nanakmata**.

Reettha Sahib: Moving about 40 miles from Gorakhmata through the thick forests, the Guru

met another group of Yogis. He sat under a soap-nut tree and told them that, by discarding family life and living in the forests away from worldly existence, could never bring salvation. The inner change for attainment of peace and everlasting joy and happiness, could be obtained anywhere by contemplating on God's Name. The Yogis asked, "Master, the fire of desire is not extinguished even by endless subjection of the body to rigorous discipline. Pray tell us a way to quench it." The Guru sang the following hymn:

Extirpating Ego-Consciousness destroy
 The sense of duality and attain
 Oneness with Lord God
 Intractable is the path for the ignorant
 and egotistic
 But those who take refuge in the Sacred Word
 And get mystically absorbed in it
 Realising thereby that He is both within and
 without
 Thus their fire of desire is destroyed
 By the Guru's grace, says Nanak
 [SGGS, *Siddh-Gosht*-46, Page 943]



The Yogis' shrewd mind yet wanted to test the Guru further. Knowing full well that he did not have anything to offer, they implored him to give

them something to eat. The Guru was sitting under the soap-nut tree that as is common knowledge yields bitter fruit. He gave them soap nuts to eat. To the utter surprise of the Yogis, the soap nuts turned out to be sweet. By the Grace of God, the soap nuts of half-side of the tree where the Guru was sitting had become sweet and the other half of the same tree retained bitter fruit, which is true even to-day. **Gurdwara Reettha Sahib** was built to commemorate the historic event.


At Banaras: After Gorakhmata, the Guru took southerly route and, passing through Gola, Ayodhya and Prayag (Allahabad), reached Banaras. Also called Varanasi [which I interpret to be 'Destroyer of Varnas' on which the notorious caste system was raised] the town is said to have been established by Lord Shiva and is revered as the Seat of Hindu Learning. The Guru and his companion Mardana encamped in a public square. Pandit Chatur Das was the chief Brahmin of the place who saw to his dismay that the Guru's dress was neither of a family man nor of a *Sanyasi* (ascetic). This prompted the Pandit to hold a long discussion with the Guru.

Guru Nanak asked the Pandit what he read to teach the people and what type of knowledge he imparted to his disciples. The Pandit replied, "By the will of God I teach the people the



fourteen sciences: reading, swimming, medicine, alchemy, astrology, singing the six *Ragas* and their *Raginis*, the science of sexual enjoyment, grammar, music, horsemanship, dancing, archery, theology, and statesmanship.” Explaining that better than all this was the knowledge of God, the Guru uttered the fifty-four stanzas of Ramkali Mahalla-1 ‘*Dakhni Omkar*’. The true God is superior to all other gods.

The first two stanzas of the hymn are given below:



One Lord God created Brahma
It is He who created our understanding
It is from the same one God the mountains
And the ages of the world issued forth
It is the one God who bestowed knowledge
It is by the Word of God that man is saved
It is by the Name of the one God
That the pious are saved
Hear an account of the letter ‘O’:
‘O’ is the best letter in the three worlds
Hear, O Pandit, why you write puzzles?
Write under the Guru’s instruction
The Name of God, the
Cherisher of the world
He created the world with ease
In the three worlds there is
Only one Lord of Light

Under the Guru’s instruction pick up
gems and pearls
And you shall realise God’s divine essence
If man understands, reflects on
And comprehends what he reads
He shall know at last that
The True One is everywhere
The pious man knows and
Remembers the truth that without
The True One the world is unreal
(Ramkali Mahalla-1 ‘*Dakhni Omkar*’;
SGGS, Page 929)

After listening to the *Shabad*, Pandit Chatur Das fell at the Guru’s feet, became a Sikh, and did much to spread the New Faith in the area under his influence. The place where the Guru stayed stands **Guru Ka Bagh Gurdwara**.

At Gaya: After Banaras, Guru Nanak reached Gaya which is a famous Hindu pilgrimage centre situated at the river Phalgu (or Falgu). The Hindu priests had declared that any offerings made at Gaya especially at the time of Baisakhi would secure salvation for seven generations of those who had departed from this world. Innocent people made huge offerings and the priests fed their *pittars* (ancestors) by offering

rice balls, lighted up little lamps to illuminate their paths in the high heavens. The Guru's laughter at this ridiculous ceremony infuriated the priests. However, the Guru explained that those who had left their bodies on earth did not need any food or a glow of lamp to find their way about. If this body could not go to the other world, obviously it was not possible for any material substance of this world to reach there. The priests and people thus enlightened were exhorted to worship One God, the Formless.

To Kamrup: After Gaya, Guru Nanak passed through the area where the modern city of Patna stands, and reached Hajipur from where through Kantnagar he arrived at Malda. The town of Malda was situated at the confluence of rivers Ganges and Mahanadi. It is reported that a local merchant of Malda did a great service to the divine personage for whom he received Guru's blessings. The next stop was Dhubri in Assam. After Dhubri, he proceeded along the Brahmaputra River on to Kamrup, a place near the modern city of Gauhati. *This whole route is marked by many old historical Gurdwaras bearing association with Guru Nanak.*

The town of Kamrup was ruled by a woman who practised black magic. She had assumed the name of Nurshah, the name of her teacher. She and her female companions practised black


magic and had overwhelming influence over the local populace, especially when the word had spread that she had charmed many a holy man.

The Guru stayed under a tree on the outskirts while Mardana went into the city to fetch something to eat. On his way, he met some women and fell victim to their machination by which he was turned into a lamb. In a state of hypnosis, Mardana did all that they commanded him to do. He was thus imprisoned by Nurshah's witchcraft and did not return to the Guru. The Guru knew what had happened to his minstrel and he marched on to rescue him from his captors. Nurshah saw the Guru coming and tried to captivate him with her charms but her black magic utterly failed. On all the black magicians' fruitless efforts, the Guru sang the following *Shabad* on *Kuchajji* [Witch]:

I am a worthless woman; full of faults;
How can I go to enjoy my spouse's
company?

Each of my spouse's wives is better than the other
O my life, nobody cares for me
My female friends who have earned
Their Spouses' favours are enjoying themselves
In the shade of the mango tree
Who can I blame for the lack of virtues in me?
What attributes of Thine, O Lord,





Shall I blazon abroad?
What names of Thine shall I repeat?
I cannot even attain one of
Thy many excellences:
I am ever a sacrifice unto Thee.
Gold, silver, pearls, and rubies which
gladden the heart
Bridegroom hath given me, and
I have fixed my heart on them.
I had palaces of brick fashioned with marble.
In these luxuries I forgot the Bridegroom
And sat not near Him
The kalongs cry in the heavens,
And the cranes have come to roost.
The woman goes to her father-in-law's;
How shall she show her face as she proceeds?
As morning dawned she soundly slept
And forgot to continue her journey
She separated from Thee, O Spouse,
And thus stored up only grief for herself
In Thee, O Lord, are merits; in me, only faults:
Nanak has this one supplication to make,
Every night is for the virtuous woman;
Though unchaste, may I obtain a night too?

[SGGS, Page 762]



Following is another revelatory utterance that
the Guru had made on the occasion:
Our speech is impressive, but deeds not so

Our minds and hearts are stained with
Black of worldliness, yet we wear
white robes
We are jealous of those who stand and serve at
God's gate
Those who love the Divine Bridegroom
Experience the bliss of His hallowed hugs
They remain meek and humble in their
strength
Our lives shall be enriched, Nanak,
if we meet such women

[SGGS, Page 85]



After the Guru's divine utterances, Nurshah thought that she should tempt him with wealth. Her attendants brought pearls, diamonds, gold, and silver, and laid them down before him. She then entreated, "O great magician, take me under your umbrage as your disciple and teach me your unique magic."

The Guru rejected all the costly gifts and spoke thus:

Why are you so haughty, O silly woman?
Why don't you relish God's love in your
own home?
The Bridegroom is near, not far, you fool


Apply the collyrium of God's fear in
your eyes
Wear the adornments of divine love
You will be reckoned a devoted happy wife
If you love the Divine Husband
What will a silly woman do if she can't
please her spouse?
However hard she may implore she can't
enter His boudoir
Without God's grace she obtains nothing
And all her striving comes to nought
Intoxicated with avarice, covetousness, and pride
She remains in drunken stupor of Mammonism
Never by these means is the Bridegroom
won over
Stupid is the woman who believes thus
Go, ask the happy wives by what means had they
Won over their spouses
Accept as good whatever He does
Get done with conceit and cleverness
Worship is the surrender of the mind
At His feet by whose love is obtained
What is most valued and beyond worldly
riches
Do whatever the Bridegroom bids you to do
Give Him your body and soul; and such
perfumes apply
As are spoken of by the happy wives:

"O Sister, by these means
The Spouse is won over.
Efface yourself, and you shall win Him over
What other art is there?"
Only that day is of any account when
The Bridegroom with favour looks
The wife has all worldly wealth earned
So is the happy wife; Nanak, who pleases her
spouse
She is the queen of them all.
Steeped in pleasure, she is drunk with
happiness
And day and night in His love absorbed
She is beautiful, fair to behold, and
accomplished
She alone is the one properly wise."

[SGGS, Page 722]

On listening to this *Shabad*, Nurshah and her companions fell at the Guru's feet, and asked for his forgiveness and blessings to obtain salvation. The Guru told them to repeat God's Name conscientiously, perform their domestic duties earnestly, renounce black magic and thus would they secure salvation. It is said that they became Guru's followers who, after a short stay, departed from there to carry on his divine mission, leaving behind many awakened souls.





Kauda Rakhshash: The Guru travelled many miles in the wilderness of Assam. As his minstrel Mardana was very hungry and tired they sat under a tree. After some time Mardana went to get something to eat. On his way he met Kauda Rakhshash, the cannibal. Kauda took Mardana by surprise and bound him hand and foot with a rope; then carried him to the spot where he had kept a large cauldron full of oil for frying the flesh of his victims. When Kauda started to light fire Mardana was mortally frightened and prayed to the Guru to come to his rescue who had foreseen what would come and was already on his way to get him released.

The Guru's sudden appearance completely bewildered Kauda who was struggling to light the fire. The Guru looked at him compassionately and graciously said, "Kauda! You see not what you do that your own actions shall throw you in hell fire!"

Kauda whose conscience was dead with heinous crimes suddenly realised his folly and was overwhelmed with repentance. He fell at the feet of the Master who, in his infinite mercy, blessed him with the Holy Name. Thus completely transformed, he led the rest of his life as the Guru's devotee engaged in socially-beneficent work.

At Jagannath Puri: After Golaghat Nagar and Dhanasri valley that was inhabited by cannibals in large numbers, the Guru went back

to Gauhati. From there, he proceeded to Shillong and to Sylhet where an old Gurdwara stands in his memory. He then went to Dacca and on the way passed through Calcutta and Cuttack, and finally reached Puri.

One of the four most revered temples of the Hindus is located at Jagannath Puri in Odisha where god Jagannath's idol sculpted by Lord Vishwakarma [In Hindu mythology the celestial architect who created the universe] was installed by the Hindu god Lord Brahma. It was the anniversary of installation of the idol when Guru Nanak reached the temple. The Guru visited the temple not to adore their Lord but to teach the people that the worship of God was superior to the worship of the mythological deities. It was evening time and the priests brought a salver studded with many lighted lamps, flowers, incense and pearls; and then all of them stood to offer the salver to their enshrined idol-god. The ceremony was called 'Arti', a song of dedication. The high priest invited Guru Nanak to join in the god's worship. The Guru did not join their service which enraged the priests.

Exposition of Aarti: On being asked the reason the Guru explained that a wonderful serenade was being sung by Nature before God's Invisible Altar. The sun and the moon were the lamps, placed in the salver of the firmament and

the fragrance wafted from off the Malayan mountains was the pervasive incense. The Guru, therefore, instead of accepting the invitation of the high-priest to adore the idol, uttered the following SIKH *Shabad* (that is not at all the Hindu *Aarti*):

(*Raag (u) Dhanaasri; Mahalla-1: Aarti,*
SGGS, Page 663)

Sun and moon are the lamps in the
salver of sky
And adorning it pearls of galaxies sparkling lie
From Malayan mountains wind fans off
pervasive incense
The entire vegetation is an offering of
fruits immense
What wondrous worship is going on,
O destroyer of fear
Unstruck strains of ecstasy are the trumpets here
**In one sense, You have a thousand
organs of sight**
In another sense, one could say You have none
One could say the same about Your lotus feet
And your thousands of organs of olfaction
I am wonderstruck by this mysterious play
the light that lights everything night and day
By Guru's grace this light manifests
Many a brilliance in this light rests
True *Aarti* is that which pleases Thee

My mind is enchanted by Your lotus feet
Just as flower enchants the bumblebee
Night and day I am longing to meet
Pray, quench this cuckoo's thirst by Your grace
That in Thy Name I find my resting place



Note: According to the *Puratan Janamsakhi*, the Guru ended his First Udasi with his visit to Puri and returned to Punjab in 1506 CE.

Karori Mal Episode: Travelling in his usual manner, during one of his *Udasis*, Guru Nanak arrived near the river Ravi where he selected for his stay a beautiful spot on the right bank, not far from Batala. The area had a large number of farms. One noon he was seated there blissfully engrossed in *Kirtan*. Staying nearby, Meeto, wife of the farm owner, was busy packing lunch for her husband Karori Mal (Karoria) and farm workers. She was mesmerized by the heavenly strains of hymnody, and thus absorbed she did not know when she completed the job in hand, and picked up the food basket, walked her way like a zombie until she was face to face with Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana. Having found both lost in divine singing, she placed the food basket in front of herself and sat down on the grass at a respectable distance from Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana so as not to disturb



them—though she had become part of the holy congregation.

When the Guru finished the *Kirtan*, he found Meeto sitting nearby. “Please come near, so that we can talk”, said he. Meeto moved forward and presented the food basket to the Guru requesting him to accept the midday meals. Observing the love in Meeto’s eyes, he fondly served the food among the three of them as was the prevailing tradition. They all ate the food and conversed. Meeto asked the Guru’s forgiveness for being late as she had gone to meet her husband, Karoria. After this, she was so excited to tell her husband what had happened that she almost ran all the way to the croplands. Reaching there, she vividly described to her husband the scene and the wonderful “Sadhu” that she had just met. As Meeto was late, Karoria was too hungry to take any notice of what she was saying.

“Why are you so late? You know how hard we have to work! I don’t want to hear about any Sadhu. Let’s have the food first”, he blurted. She served the food to her husband and five farm workers. Then she again told Karoria about Guru Nanak. Now that he had satisfied his hunger, he heard her story with rapt attention, and agreed to meet the Guru. And soon both them were there face to face with the Guru.

Karoria said, “Baba Ji, all these fields as far as the eye can see belong to me!”

Guru Nanak asked, “Karoria, who had owned these fields before you?”

“Baba Ji, my father owned these fields before me”, he replied.

“And Karoria, who had owned them before your father?” quizzed the Guru.

Karoria got a bit worried as he got the impression that the Guru might be testing him.

So he began to think carefully and answered, “Well, Baba Ji, my grandfather owned the fields before my father did.”

“Karoria Ji, tell me where have they (meaning father and grandfather) gone now?” queried the Guru.

As Karoria answered “Well Baba Ji, they have left this world”, it suddenly dawned on him that the fields did not really belong to him as he would as well be gone soon.

Having understood the Guru’s message, Karoria touched the Holy Personage’s feet in reverence and pleaded with him to stay with them for a little while. As was his wont, Guru Nanak smilingly acceded to his request.

Jatt Brahmins: Combat and cultivation were the main profession of the **Mohyals** or Jatt

Brahmins for centuries. With a noble heritage behind them they were the sovereigns of Punjab before the advent of Muslim emperors. There are some who believe that even Porus who valiantly faced Alexander the Great was a Mohyal. Though they are known to be Brahmins they never took to Brahmanical ritualism and vehemently discountenanced alms or *Pooja Daan* [devotees' worship offerings]. *Sikhi* denounces the concept of renunciation or withdrawal from society and exhorts its followers to participate in the natural processes of life. This was the reason why the militant castes, notably, the Mohyals were attracted towards it. Furthermore, the founder of the Sikh Faith, Guru Nanak did not believe in the theory of '*Paap-Pun*' i.e. sin and good. According to him, the universe is a drama enacted by God in which an individual as His creature ought to participate by siding with the forces of good in order to resist the villains of evil without fear of death because the soul is immortal. During armed fight for a noble cause or '*sewa*' if this body is lost the soul will merge with Divine Essence liberating the martyr from the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The Mohyals found these tenets welcome and thus converted to *Sikhi en masse*. Also, because Guru Nanak's New Faith did not particularly prohibit consumption of meat, it suited the Mohyals' eating habits.

Guru Nanak turned many houses into *Sach Dharamsaals* [Literally, True Abodes of Cosmic Moral Law] offering food and shelter to pilgrims and tourists. In the early years of advent of the Sikh Faith even the Places of Worship were called "*Dharamsaals*". The word "*Gurdwara*" which is now used worldwide for the Sikh Temple is of a later origin. As noted before, when Sajjan Thug [a notorious cheat and swindler who used to invite travellers to his residence; then, kill them in the middle of night to rob them of their belongings] was reclaimed by the Guru and appointed a missionary, he too like Malik Bhago [rich exploiter of Sayyadpur reformed by Guru Nanak] distributed everything among the poor that he had hoarded by dishonest means. The grand mansion, where innumerable murders of innocent travellers had been committed, was razed to the ground. Sajjan built a simple and small hut for himself which he considered a *Dharamsaal* for others; a place of all-embracing love and service. The Guru had instructed him in the fundamentals of the Sikh Faith and charged him with the duty of reclaiming others to the path of righteousness.

There lived at Decca a landlord named Bhoomia. He was a dacoit, but with all his wrong doings, kept running an inn, where saints and fakirs, travellers, and wayfarers were fed. People were so afraid of him that none had the courage



to speak a word against him. When Guru Nanak went to Decca, people sent him to Bhoomia's house, saying that all holy men and strangers took shelter and meals there. The divine light and radiant joy of the Guru's face set him apart from the multitude. Bhoomia came running to him and requested, "Please come to my house and partake of the food ready therein." "No", said Guru Nanak, "your food is saturated with the blood of the poor." These words entered Bhoomia's very soul. With hands joined in entreaty, he again said, "Pray, do grace my kitchen and taste a bit of food and I will do as you instruct."

Give up life of a dacoit; Bhoomia bowed before the Guru who exhorted him thus: (1) Do not rob the poor, (2) Always speak the truth, (3) Do no harm to him whose salt you have tasted, and (4) Do not force the innocent to suffer for your sake.

"These shall I obey with all my heart and soul; but, pray, do grace my house." Guru Nanak with other saints and travellers then partook of Bhoomia's food at his kitchen and departed after a short stay. Bhoomia still had a kitchen but thenceforth served food to all in God's name, turning it into *Guru Ka Langar*.

One Bhai Mansukh, an enterprising merchant, was among the first devoted disciples of Guru Nanak. In one of his trade trips he had gone to

Ceylon. After his meditation and prayers every morning he used to distribute *Karah Parsaad* [Sikh Sacrament] among his neighbours. The king of Ceylon, Shivnabh, was a Vaishnava [Devotee of Lord Vishnu—the Protector in the triune concept of God in Hinduism], and had ordered the day of *Ekadashi Vrat* (to fast mandatorily according to Hindu religious rites) to be strictly observed throughout his kingdom. Everyone had to fast for the whole day and break the fast with fruits and uncooked eatables. An *Ekadashi* day fell during Mansukh's stay in Ceylon. Firm in his faith, devotion and daily routine, he prepared *Karah Parsaad* even on *Ekadashi* day. When he got ready to distribute it among his neighbours a complaint was lodged with the king that a foreign trader had not observed the compulsory fast and had cooked *Karah Parsaad*.

Taken to the king's presence he was brusquely asked, "How dare you break the law of the land and cook on the *Ekadashi* day?" In a very sweet and humble tone of voice Mansukh explained to the king how he had met Guru Nanak and how the Guru's exhortations had raised him above all doubts and fears. He observed no fast and had found the right path which showed One-in-All and All-in-One. The talk of Mansukh "Remember him day and night in true love and devotion and he shall come to you" impressed Shivnabh so deeply that he requested him to arrange his

meeting with Guru Nanak. Attracted by the long vigil and prayers of the king, Guru Nanak was drawn to Ceylon. Shivrabh went barefoot to call on the Guru, who was then resting in a garden. Prostrating himself at his holy feet, the king said, “You have blessed me by gracing this land with your divine presence. Pray, do set your holy feet in my palace and sanctify it.” Guru Nanak replied, “Start a *Langar* [Free Community Kitchen] and build *Dharamsal* [inn or resting place for the travelling devotees] for the poor and the needy; then, I shall come to thee.”

Langar was promptly started and the construction of a *Dharamsaal* begun. As soon as it was ready, Guru Nanak went to the *Dharamsal*. For several months Guru stayed there, addressed the congregations, and helped the people how to meditate on the Divine Name. Throughout the year, free food was served daily to the people who joined the congregation. Meals were offered to all even on the Ekadashi day.

After his long Missionary Journeys to distant lands, Guru Nanak finally settled down at Kartarpur, the town of Kartar (the Creator) as he named the new town that he had himself founded on the right bank of River Ravi in Tehsil Shakargarh, Narowal District in Punjab, now in Pakistan.. He lived there as a householder with his family and took to farming till his demise in 1539. His disciples gathered around him in great

numbers. Many had set up their shops and farms at Kartarpur. Hundreds of visitors would come to the Guru everyday from far and near.

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur is located in Kartarpur. The nearest town at a distance of one kilometre on the Indian side is *Dera Baba Nanak* in the district of Gurdaspur in which the historic shrine is located about three kilometres from the Indo-Pakistan Border. The original abode established by Guru Nanak was washed away by floods of the River Ravi and the present Gurdwara was built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The Gurdwara at Kartarpur is located next to a small village named *Kothey Pind* (house-village) on the West bank of River Ravi in Punjab, Pakistan, and can be seen from another Gurdwara located across the border at the historical town of Dera Baba Nanak in India (It is not Dera [Abode/Hermitage], as so many people erroneously call it. *Dehra* is derived from the word *Deh* or Body). Both sites located in the Majha Region are among the holiest places of the Sikh Faith. Recently, there has been lobbying to open the corridor for Sikhs from India to visit the shrine without any hindrance or visa. It lies only three kilometres from the border.

When Guru Nanak left this terrestrial world for his celestial abode, both Hindus and Muslims disagreed on how to perform his last rites: by cremation or burial, respectively. Since the issue



remained unresolved, a *Samaadh* [commemorative shrine raised over the ashes of the deceased], according to Hindu tradition, was built that lies in the Gurdwara, and a grave, according to Muslim religious traditions, was built on the premises. This is an unprecedented reminder of the 'divine' discord over the Holy Personage's last rites which demonstrated with soul-stirring eloquence the competitive, intense, and uncompromising love of his devout disciples from Hinduism and Islam, and established Guru Nanak Dev as World's Greatest Prophet, *true* in every sense of the phrase.

According to Bhai Gurdas, the Guru used to get up early in the morning, take bath, and then hold morning prayers after which meals were served from the Free Community Kitchen [*Langar*]. Congregational prayers were held twice a day and holy hymns were sung by the Guru and his devotees in a chorus. After the evening prayers, the *Sangat* [Congregation] again dined together. From this pioneering socially-beneficent institution firm foundation was laid for the system of Sikh *Sangat* and *Pangat* [sitting together for community dining], both of which played a significant role in the development of the world's youngest and most dynamic religion. It was ordained that all Sikhs and other visitors ought to sit down together for partaking of the community food without regard to their

caste, colour, creed, socio-economic status, or ethnic distinctions because *Langar* was the sacrament [*Amrit* or ambrosia] of God's mercy, grace, and benediction. Eating together in the Community Kitchen was made compulsory during the time of Guru Amardas (23 May 1479 - 16 September 1574), Third Master of the Sikh Faith, for all those who wanted to call on the Guru to have his glimpse and blessing. The prescription was: *Pangat* [Dining together] before *Sangat* [Darshan in the midst of the congregation] which was absolutely strictly enforced, so much so that Mughal Emperor, Akbar the Great, had to observe the spiritual rule to have a glimpse of Guru Amar Das.

Reverting to this unique socio-spiritual tradition established by him, it must be said that all those who came to pay their homage to Guru Nanak at Kartarpur had to do one or other of the menial jobs: sweeping/scrubbing the floor, dusting the devotees footwear and their caretaking, washing dishes, helping with precooking and cooking chores, serving food, and so forth. It was the founder's ingenious way of inculcating Humility among the devotees because the chronic caste system of Hindu inheritance had looked down upon menial jobs and called them suitable only for the lowest caste, the *Shudras*. Guru Nanak had made Humility the Cardinal Principle of the Sikh

Faith, and deemed it to be a rare divine endowment that he himself demonstrated when he ploughed his land, tended it to raise the crops, and reaped the harvest for community consumption thereby inspiring the devotees to follow suit in various capacities. Guru Nanak's institution of the *Langar* at Kartarpur was a revolutionary step in the direction of uprooting the notorious caste system. Whereas on the one hand, the *Langar* was conceived to be a refuge for the poor and the destitute; on the other hand, it was to help effectively in levelling up the four-tiered caste-ridden society into well-knit commune of humane equality.

This unprecedented and farsighted initiative sowed the seed for the development of an egalitarian social order. It brought about a big change in the people's mindset who practised with religious zeal the new discipline gifted by Guru Nanak. The devotees steadily adopted a new lifestyle which was based on the concept of collective living like in one huge family, earning an honest livelihood, sharing the earnings with the underprivileged, and doing social service in a long stillness of prayer as thanks-giving to God for His countless gifts. What appealed to them most was the heart-warming and soul-uplifting sense of fellowship and common human purpose. The Guru's discourses on the meaninglessness of religious rituals and hierarchical caste-based

distinctions reinforced their belief in social justice, piety, philanthropy, and love for all Humanity as the Essence of Man—God's most beautiful creation. The colony of worshippers rapidly grew under the personal supervision and guidance of their spiritual mentor Guru Nanak, who conducted himself as one of them, toiled to till the land to grow food, took food from the Community Kitchen, and looked after the needs and comforts of his companions. Most of Guru Nanak's disciples worked with him in his fields with pleasure deeming their task to be a divine privilege.


Guru Nanak was of the people, for the people, and his stores were open to them as their own property at all hours of the day, and crowds came and freely partook of the Guru's gifts. However, while their physical hunger was satiated their spiritual hunger became desperately eager; and all who came to visit him were fed from the Guru's divine pantry of thought, love, and life-assuring spirit of the Holy Name. Guru Nanak as personification of Humility and love was an inspiring Master and a great reformer who influenced people of different faiths by his sweetness, frankness, devotional music; above all, his over-brimming love for Lord God and His creation. Many people were attracted towards him for they saw in his persona an exemplary integration of the temporal and spiritual goals of life. Those who became his



faithful devotees set apart a place of worship in their homes and called them *Dharamsaals* [Refuge of *Dharma*—The Cosmic Moral Law].

Bhai Gurdas testifies to the growth of such places of prayer where hymn-singing became for Guru Nanak's disciples a new way of life:

Every home was blessed to become a temple
Filled with rapturous strains of *Kirtan* in ample



NOTE: *Kirtan* was instituted by Guru Nanak Dev as collective worship centred on singing to *Ragas* of Indian classical music *Shabads* [hymns] from *Gurbani* as paeans to the Glory of God. Hindustani Sangeet as a receptacle was filled to the brim by God's perennial grace when Guru Nanak elevated it to the Realm of Divinity through the means of *Kirtan*, which imparts mind-cleansing melody to the magnificence of *Shabda*. In other words, in *Kirtan*, *Shabda* [The Revealed Sacred Word—not mere poetic diction] is supreme while music acts as a vehicle that creates an ambience congenial to the Meditative-Hearkening of NAAM—as Life's prop, purpose, pursuit, and destination. It is, therefore, incumbent upon *Ragis* [baptised professionally trained hymn-singers] to sing a given hymn to the prescribed *Raga*, Tune, and Beat with focus on clearly audible and correct pronunciation of each word so that each member in the *Sangat* [Holy Congregation] is persuaded to listen to the *Kirtan* with rapt attention. I have coined the term “Meditative-Hearkening of NAAM” hymn-singing as an offering to Lord God whose praises are extolled so that the presentation qualifies as *Shabda Kirtan*. If this divine aim is not achieved the whole exercise becomes *Shabda Gaayan* in which the Sacred Word [*Shabda*] is reduced to mere lyrics of a worldly poem.

As the unique socio-cultural tradition got speedily established, *Langar* was served to all those who had congregated for prayers in the houses of devout Sikhs. Whether at Kartarpur, or away in their respective villages, the people dedicatedly worked for the preparing and serving community meals to one and all. Many contributed their earnings to *Langar* when they came to meet the Guru.

Puran Singh says, “*The sacrifice of selfishness was made for the gladness of the soul that the act gave to the people who came round Guru Nanak. The souls of the people were so fully nourished and satisfied that they could not entertain feelings of difference and duality ... We are never selfish when we are in love. The people came and laid their selfishness at his feet and begged a little of it for his service. To serve the devotees was serving the Master. This union was so spiritually co-operative that none knew if his own hands were his or of the Guru ... The bodies and hearts and minds were mingling with each other and with those of the Master, by the magic of his presence amongst them. Here was a religion that made love and labour the common property of man.*”

By settling down at Kartarpur as a farmer and starting a free kitchen with his *Dharamsaal*, Guru Nanak set living example of Sikh Faith's foundational tenets: “Earning one's bread by

honest labour and sharing one's earnings with the under-privileged". Neither sun nor rain, nor any other calamity of any magnitude, could stop the serving of free meals in the common kitchen of the Guru. The fire lit in the 'Temple of Bread' by Guru Nanak was kept burning by the succeeding Nine Gurus who walked in his footsteps with undiminished humility, love, and devotion—making *Langar* a formidable unifying force in caste-ridden Indian society in which social discrimination was a chronic disease perpetuated by retrograde religious sanction.

GURU NANAK AND RAJA SHIVNABH

In the first decade of the sixteenth century, when Guru Nanak visited *Singhladwip* [Sri Lanka], the island nation's rulers were from Prakarmbahu dynasty, and Shivnabh or Sheonabh was the king. It is said that the Guru "covered his head with ropes, and tied ropes around arms and legs during his visit to the South. He wore wooden sandals and sported Hindu vermilion mark on his forehead. He was accompanied by Saido and Seeho Gheho, Jatt by caste." In *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*, the duration of the visit to Sri Lanka is recorded thus: "Further they reached the kingdom of King Sheonabh Sangla Deep [also spelled *Singhladwip*] in one and a half months—Guru Nanak stayed there for two years five

months." His mode of travel is described in *Meharban Janamsakhi*: "If Baba so felt, he walked for days together or sat for many days. For many days he remained meditating and for many days he remained quiet." His travel to Sri Lanka was by boat/ship from one port to another and on foot when going cross-country. The purpose of Guru Nanak's visit to Sri Lanka was to spread the message of One Lord God whose key attribute is Truth—unchanging reality because He transcends Time-Space Continuum as His own creation. His devout follower Mansukh, a Lahore-based *Bania* (trader), had visited Sri Lanka earlier on many business trips. He religiously recited Guru's hymns and lived a pious life. King Shivnabh was very much impressed by this trader's devotion to the Guru, and experienced a mounting desire to pay his obeisance to him. It was on his request that Guru Nanak visited Sri Lanka.

Mandatory Fast on *Ikadashi*: According to another legend, the King of Sri Lanka, Shivnabh, used to observe fast on *Ikadashi* (first of each lunar month) and enforced this practice as a rule on his people. Those who did not obey it were punished. However, Mansukh did not observe fast; instead as his well-established routine continued to sing hymns of the Lord and distribute *Prasad* on *Ikadashi*. The king got him



arrested on a complaint and enquired as to why he did not observe the fast. The trader stated that it was his Guru's teachings that those who eat less and worship the Lord, they observe *Ikadashi* daily. The king enquired, "Who is your Guru?" The trader said, "My Guru is Nanak of Kartarpur." The king then said, "I wish to see Guru Nanak. How can I see him?" The trader said, "You pray to the Lord, build halting place for the Guru and serve the visiting saints. Guru Nanak will be seen by you as well." The king enquired further, "Which form does he appear in?" The trader said, "He will appear as a saint. You have to keep faith and remember him." The king had the Guru's place raised in a dried-up garden and started serving the visiting saints." Back in Punjab, when Mansukh narrated the episode and conveyed Shivrabh's eagerness to meet him, Guru Nanak said, "Listen to this, Bhai Mardana; it is important that we go there." Mardana agreed with the Guru and they embarked upon a journey towards South.

Barren Garden turned Green: Guru Nanak took his seat in Raja Shivrabh's garden which was at that time barren, but it is said to have turned green on the Guru's arrival. The gardener requested the king to go and see the fakir who had caused the withered garden to bloom afresh. The Guru had gone to those places where the

worst of sinners and evil doers dwelt. When Guru Nanak visited Shivrabh's kingdom, the Raja did not believe in God and was thus in dire need of psycho-spiritual treatment of the damned disease: Atheism.

Shivrabh's ministers warned him not to meet Guru Nanak unless he wanted to be cursed. Therefore, four ministers were sent to meet the Guru with a view to stopping him from reaching the Kingdom. They made obeisance and offered a silver plate laden with diamonds at his feet. They said, "This offering shows our King's respect for you."

Guru Nanak said, "Tell him how he can express his respect for me with mere pennies."

The ministers were taken aback because all other saints had accepted such offerings and left the King alone. The ministers thus told Shivrabh that this was no ordinary saint. Guru Nanak said to the ministers, "Tell Shiv-Nabh that if he wants to make an offering he ought to come and do so personally."

Puzzled King: As an egotist, Shivrabh failed to discern the Guru's extraordinary exalted stature. Much to the contrary, he felt convinced that the Guru too was stricken with the same disease. Next time he sent a group of his dancing prostitutes feeling confident that the Guru would be tempted, but this move too turned out to be a

ridiculous fiasco when he addressed them as daughters. When this news was conveyed to him, puzzled Raja Shivrabh was shaken to the core of his being and as God's fear entered his mind he mumbled to himself, "Who is this incorruptible man?"

Penitent Shivrabh meets the Guru: A sudden upsurge of penitence welled up in his heart and the King came personally to enquire his name, caste, and whether he was a Jogi. As was his wont, the Guru replied: *"A Jogi is he who has identified his life with the Holy Name; he alone is pure without an iota of uncleanness. He who keeps with him the Name of the Beloved, which is ever true, stands liberated from the endless cycle of births and deaths."*

The King queried if he was a Brahmin. The Guru replied, *"A Brahmin is he who has divine knowledge for his ablutions, and God's praises for the offertory leaves of his worship. There is but One Name, One God, and One Light in the three worlds."*

Then, the King asked if he was a shopkeeper. The Guru replied, *"Make your heart the weighing scale, your tongue the beam, and weigh the inestimable Holy Name. There is but one shop, one Merchant, above all, though the dealers are many."*

The King again enquired if he was a Hindu or a Muhammedan. The Guru continued his

enigmatical replies, *"The True Guru has solved the problem of duality of the two ways. It is he who fixes attention on the One God, and whose mind wanders not, who can understand it. He, who abides in the Word and ever worships day and night, has ended his doubts."*

Pestered by childlike curiosity the King then asked if he was Gorakhnath. The Guru, showing no inclination to directly gratify his curiosity, proclaimed thus: *"Above us is the sky, Gorakh is above the sky; His inaccessible form dwells there; By the favour of the Guru, whether I am abroad or at home matters not to me; Nanak has become such an anchorite."*

When the Guru had ended his discourse, the King invited him to come to his palace and see his queen. He gave him an opportunity of administering his doctrines to her.

Without firstly having the fear of God, love can't enter. Without love one can't worship the Lord God. Shivrabh had the fear of God enter into his mind. He bowed to the Guru; then joined his hands and made supplication.

Humility is Psycho-Spiritual Receptivity:

To ask for something you have to become humble because without Humility mind is not at all receptive to the Sacrament of Spirituality. *"Gareeb Nivaz, O Protector of the Poor, I'm the King of this land. Be merciful and grant me the gift of Sewa [service]. But the service shouldn't*



be small; it should be big enough for a King, what can I offer you in return?”

Guru Nanak said, “This is the path of love, no one else can travel this path. If you want to give an offering, then donate something of yours and do something that’s going to help you in your next life.”

Shivnabh said, “I will donate *my* kingdom to you, Guru.” Guru Nanak said, “O foolish Shivnabh, I said - give me something of *yours*, this Kingdom isn’t yours and it is not going to help you in the next world. Your father couldn’t take it when he died; your grandfather couldn’t take it either and neither can you take it because it doesn’t belong to you!”

The Guru repeating his original assertion firmly said, “O *Shiv-Nabh*, donate something of *yours*, the kingdom is *not* yours, the queen that rules it with you is not yours; *now donate something that’s truly yours!*”

Shivnabh said, “I will donate *my* body to you.” The Guru reiterated, ‘O foolish Shivnabh, this body isn’t *yours*. Where are your father’s and grandfather’s bodies now? They had to leave them in this world, the body wasn’t theirs, and it is not yours either. Now donate something that’s *yours!*”

Getting desperate, Shivnabh said, “What can I give? Take my name.” To which, Guru Nanak said, “Shivnabh, if you want to give me your

name; then show me Shiva’s Navel, that’s what *Shiv-Nabh* means. You aren’t Shiva; you can’t give me *his* navel, can you?”

Nervous and confused, and in a quandary, Shivnabh said, “I don’t own this body, I haven’t got riches, I don’t own my Kingdom, the Queen doesn’t belong to me, O Guru, what ‘I’ can give?” [He repeated the ‘I’ three times.]

The Guru said, “But you’re in possession of such a great thing that if you give it to me you’ll be liberated from the endless cycle of birth and death.”

Shivnabh said, “I can’t see what ‘I’ can give? Pray, tell me, what “I” actually can give?” Again, his stress was on his “I”!

The Guru said, “Give this “I” that you keep bleating like a goat! Your kingdom, your body, and your name will all come along to me when you part with *your* ‘I.’”

With his soul inebriated, Shivnabh fell at the Guru’s feet as a changed man—reborn into a state of spiritual illumination, and, in self-surrender, said, “Everything is *yours*, nothing is mine, nothing is mine, my Guru.”

With his ‘Ego’ completely demolished, Shivnabh became a humble servant, and said, “I’m nothing!”

Guru Nanak said, “Now go back to your duties and rule the Kingdom.”

Shivnabh replied, “I can’t rule, earlier *my* “I” was doing it, but now I’m nothing; therefore, I cannot do anything.”

The Guru said, “If someone asks you whose Kingdom you are ruling, just say it’s the Guru’s. If someone asks you who you belong to, your reply should be: my Guru.”

Having obtained *Brahma Gyan* [Highest Knowledge] Shivrabh acquiesced. Then, Guru Nanak said, “Ask for something?”

Raja Shivrabh asked for God’s Name, “Bless me with NAAM so that I may always have a place at your lotus feet!”

King of a mere island kingdom Shivrabh thus became an ocean of Humility filled with enlightened comprehension and infinite compassion.

Rameshwaram: It is said that Guru Nanak on his return homeward journey from Sri Lanka visited Rameshwaram in 1511 and halted there for 19 days.

On to Mecca: Guru Nanak was dead tired when he reached Mecca on foot. As his feet were sore he needed rest. So he lay down with his feet towards the *K’aba*. On observing this blasphemy, Qazi Rukn-ud-din kicked the Guru and angrily shouted: “Infidel! How dare you dishonour God’s place by turning your feet towards Him?” Calmly, Guru Nanak said to him, “Brother, don’t be angry. I am very tired. I need rest. I respect the House of God as much as you do. Please turn my

feet in a direction in which God or the House of God is not.”

The Qazi angrily grabbed the Guru’s feet and dragged them in the opposite direction; but when he lifted his eyes he saw the *K’aba* standing in the direction of the Guru’s feet. He turned the Guru’s feet in another direction. The *K’aba* was seen standing in that direction. He dragged them round and round, and the *K’aba* was not only seen rotating too but also zealously following the direction of the Guru’s feet. Wonderstruck, the Qazi recognised Guru Nanak’s divine glory. Not only he but also *Haajis* [pilgrims] were all filled with wonder—and gave up their self-avowed corrective drill in utter helplessness. The Guru then got up, and accosted them thus, “Don’t you see that God’s House is in every direction? I tell you that He dwells in every place, in every bosom, at all times. He is in you people’s hearts as much as He is in mine.”

According to Wikipedia, “The *Kaaba* (Arabic: كَعْبَة *al-ka‘bah* IPA: [alˈkaʕba], “The Cube”), also referred to as *al-Ka‘bah al-Musharrafah* (Arabic: الْكَعْبَة الْمُسَرَّفَة, the Holy Ka‘bah), is a building at the center of Islam’s most important mosque, Great Mosque of Mecca (Arabic: الْمَسْجِد الْحَرَام, The Sacred Mosque), in the Hejazi city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is the most sacred site in Islam. It is considered by Muslims to be the *Bayt Allāh* (Arabic: بَيْتُ اللَّهِ, “House of God”), and has a similar role to the Tabernacle and Holy of Holies



in Judaism. Its location determines the *qiblah* (Arabic: *قِبْلَة*, direction of prayer). Wherever they are in the world, Muslims are expected to face the *Kaaba* when performing *Salah*, the Islamic prayer.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba]

The Guru meets the Pir and the Qazi:

Accompanied by Bhai Mardana, Guru Nanak met Pir Bahawal Haq and Qazi Rukn-ud-din at Mecca. In the morning, a number of learned *Haajis* would gather around the Guru, and hold religious discourses with him. He satisfied every one of them, and explained to them his golden rules of religious life. They listened to him with rapt attention and were changed persons. The Qazis and the Mullahs assembled to question Nanak on the subject of religion and God and many related questions that pester the human mind. The Muslim priest opened a book and asked him, “Who is superior – Hindu or Musalman?” The Guru answered, “Oh Haajis, without performance of good deeds, both Hindus and Muslims shall lament. Both will be denied shelter at God’s court because mere affiliation with one faith or another is no qualification. The colour of the flower called *Kusumbha* (*Carthamus tinctorius*) is washed away by water (so labels are fragile). The followers of both religions are quarrelling, but all of them are equal in the Eyes of God. The world has gone astray by treading the path of sin.”

Guru Nanak’s unconditional equal love for both Hindus and Muslims who were always at

daggers drawn won him the famous sobriquet: *Nanak Shah Fakir, Hindu ka Guru; Muslim ka Pir.*

Unlike any other prophet or God man or sage or Rishi, Guru Nanak never sought to convert anyone to the Sikh Faith. Only in an open-minded, self-illuminating discourse, he showed to his admirers the True Way of their own Religion. Bhai Mardana was his first Sikh but remained a Muslim all his life. The same was true of Bhai Bala who continued to be a Hindu. The following example is among the pithiest of his God-inspired spiritual exhortations.

It is difficult to be called a Muslim;
If one is truly a Muslim, then he may be
called one.

First, let him savour the religion of the
Prophet as sweet;

Then, let his pride of his possessions
be scraped away.

Becoming a true Muslim, a disciple of the
faith of Muhammad,

Let him put aside the delusion of
death and life.

As he submits to God’s Will, and surrenders to
the Creator,

He is rid of selfishness and conceit.

And when, O Nanak, he is merciful
to all beings,

Only then shall he be called a Muslim.

[SGGS, Page 141]



There are five prayers and
 Five times of day for prayer
 The five prayers have five names
 Let the first be truthfulness
 The second honest living, and
 The third charity in the Name of God
 Let the fourth be good will to all, and
 The fifth the praise of the Lord
 Repeat the prayer of good deeds, and then
 You may call yourself a Muslim
 O Nanak, the false obtain falsehood
 Nothing but falsehood

[SGGS, Page 141]



Some of the key terms used in discourses on Islam are elucidated here from the Guru's enlightenment.

K'aba: Keeping your fasts, reciting your prayers, and reading the *Kalima*, the Islamic creed, shall not take you to paradise.

The Temple of Mecca is hidden within your mind, only if you knew it.

Mecca: Guru Nanak had ready answers for all questions because his mind was constantly

connected with *The Source* whence they sprang as fresh water jets from out of artesian wells. His explanations were in verse form because Poetry as the Language Prophesy came to him as invaluable divine gift, as can be seen in the example quoted below:

Let compassion be your Mecca
 And the dust of the feet of the holy your fast
 Let Paradise be your practice of the
 Prophet's Word
 God is the beauty, the light and the fragrance
 Meditation on Allah is the secluded
 meditation chamber
 Let your mind be *Mecca*, and your body
 the temple of worship



Haaji: He alone is a *Haaji*, a pilgrim to *Mecca*, who purifies his heart.

Namaaz: Sikhs neither worship books, nor do they believe in empty rituals. In *Gurmat* [Guru's Wisdom], these are discountenanced with a stroke of finality that leaves no doubt in the devotees' minds. Further, Nanak also explained what the actual definition of true *Namaaz* is.



CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT TEN GURUS OF THE SIKH FAITH

Number	Name of Guru	Date of Birth	Attained Guruship	Date of Ascension	Age
1	Nanak Dev	15 April 1469	20 August 1507	22 September 1539	69
2	Angad Dev	31 March 1504	7 September 1539	29 March 1552	48
3	Amar Das	5 May 1479	26 March 1552	1 September 1574	95
4	Ram Das	24 September 1534	1 September 1574	1 September 1581	46
5	Arjan Dev	15 April 1563	1 September 1581	30 May 1606	43
6	Har Gobind	19 June 1595	25 May 1606	28 February 1644	48
7	Har Rai	16 January 1630	3 March 1644	6 October 1661	31
8	Har Krishan	7 July 1656	6 October 1661	30 March 1664	7
9	Tegh Bahadar	1 April 1621	20 March 1665	11 November 1675	54
10	Gobind Singh	22 December 1666	11 November 1675	7 October 1708	41
11	Guru Granth Sahib	Not Applicable	7 October 1708	Not Applicable	N/A

SOURCE: Internet

- Guru Angad Dev attained Guruship in the same month, September, in which Guru Nanak Dev breathed his last.
- Guru Angad Dev's birthday and day of death fall in the same month: March.
- Both Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Arjan Dev were born on the same date i.e. April 15 separated by 94 years.
- Both Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas died on September 1 separated by seven years.
- Guru Gobind Singh died one day and 47 years after Guru Har Rai.
- Guru Har Krishan and Guru Angad Dev died in the same month, March, separated by 112 years and one day.
- Guru Amardas was the oldest to be sworn in to Guru Nanak Dev's Spiritual Ministry at the age of 72 years one month and 21 days, and Guru Har Krishan was the youngest to become Guru at the age of 5

years two months 29 days, and the youngest to die at the age of seven years three months and 23 days.

- Guru Ramdas was born and died in the same month, September.
- Bhai Mardana died five years before (1534) and Bhai Bala left this world five years after (1544) Guru Nanak cast off his mortal frame (1539).

MEANINGS OF NUMBERS IN THE LIVES OF THE TEN SIKH GURUS

Though the Sikh Faith discountenances such things as Numerology, Astrology, etc, I cannot resist the temptation of dealing with the significance of numbers in the lives of the 10 Gurus that point to certain strange facts. Those unfamiliar with Numerology might be provoked to pronounce a hasty judgement on my notion—and they have a right to do so. However, I would like to remind them that I hold Guru Nanak Dev to be the World's Greatest Prophet who not only gave new direction to religious discourse but also uplifted religion from out of the quagmire of superstitions, myths, prejudices, and communalism to connect the soul *directly* with Lord God through his Revelation of NAAM. So far he is the first and last Messenger of God to prefix Numeral “1” to *Oankar* to offer the

Sacred Formula rooted in Pragmatic Spirituality that extends its outreach from Places of Worship to serve on a platter to the teeming millions for their psycho-social amelioration. According to the Greek philosopher, disciple of Socrates, Plato, “Numbers are the highest degree of knowledge. It is knowledge itself.”

In the light of this brief exposition, I would like to point out that the total number of pages of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is 1430 which has a profound spiritual significance. Number 1 and 0, respectively, represent Lord God's manifest [*Sarguna*] and transcendent [*Nirguna*] attributes. Even when God chooses to become manifest He remains *ONE* without an equal. Zero [*Shunya*] is thus His Self-absorbed state of *Sunn Samadhi* [deep meditation]. Number 4 signifies completion in Pragmatic Spirituality. Number 0 is the mother of existence. Everything comes from this void, this inexplicable, dark, eternal womb. Nobody has 0 as their life path or destiny number. Just the same this Numeral is the number of the Universe itself. We are all children of 0. Number 3 means wisdom, creativity, and mysticism. The total of the digits is Number 8 that has two four's symbolising the pragmatic and the spiritual worlds; in other words, Pragmatic Spirituality. For my second PhD done in 2000, as noted before, I had coined the term “Creative Mysticism” as a substitute for “Religion” which



the so-called modern world looks down upon as something superstitious and antagonist to Humanity as a whole, hopelessly incompatible with Science. Thus declaring *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as the *Guru Eternal*, the Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh had not only ended the lineage of human preceptors but also reiterated the significance of *Ik Oankar* as propounded by Guru Nanak Dev. Ever since *Dasmesh Pita's* declaration, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* has been hailed and worshipped as non-human Eleventh Guru—Sovereign, Eternal, Impeccable, and Unrivalled. In Numerology, Number 11 is called the First *Master* Number, and recognised to possess the most spiritual vibrations with the paramount mission of serving humankind.

Taking all the months in which all the Ten Gurus were born and died, the month of August is missing. The month of August bears the Number 8 which is called the Number of Saturn that represents Death. Its absence from the history of the Sikh Gurus signifies that there is no death for them. They shall *eternally* live.

The Spiritual Ministry of the Ten Sikh Gurus lasted 239 years five months and 22 days or 87469 days which digits, when added laterally, total up to 34 or Number 7 that represents Spirituality.

Guru Nanak's birthday, 15 April 1469, was a Thursday, and the 105th day of the year that fell in the 16th week of the year. Thursday is Jupiter, in Hindu mythology, is *Brihaspati* who is the Guru [Spiritual Preceptor] of *Devas* [Hindu gods], personification of piety and religion, the chief offerer of prayers and sacrifices, represented as the *Purohita* [Priest] of the gods with whom he intercedes for men. He is the Lord of planet Jupiter. He is of *Sattva Guna* [Purity as a quality of *Prakriti* or Nature] and represents knowledge and teaching. He is often known simply as "Guru".

Guru Nanak Dev's Birth Number and 105th day of the year to which it relates have both Venus Number i.e. 6 which stands for creativity, cosmopolitanism, and compassion. His birth in the 16th week denotes Neptune or Number 7 which represents Spirituality. His Destiny Number is 30. Number 30 stands for awesome ambition—more appropriately divinely fuelled mission, the inextinguishable burning desire that led him to travel for nearly three decades to different parts of the world to spread the Holy Word revealed to him by God in Bein River for the amelioration of the human condition regardless of caste, creed, colour, and ethnic eccentricities 🌿





7



AN ARCHITECT'S VIEW OF JAPJI

Guru Nanak has proclaimed Lord God's Name to be higher than He is, even though as Creator of the cosmos He is the highest. In my view, this is so because Holy Name is the support and power of the cosmos and runs, monitors, and manages its enormous functions.

Great is the Lord; exalted, His shelter
Tallest is He but His Name is higher

[Japji: Pauri 24]



Therefore, the Holy Name is not only an appellation of the Supreme Creator but also embodies His manifest might, matchless magnificence, and massive munificence—all these unparalleled attributes together sum up His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

Whatever God has created is His Name
There is not a place without His Name

[Japji: Pauri 19]



In the light of the foregoing exposition, it should be easy to grasp that the entire creation, in fact, is Lord God's Name and, by this token, He permeates the Cosmos by His omnipresence.

To avoid falling into error in the interpretation of Guru Nanak's Revelation, it is imperative to understand the meaning and significance of two key terms that he has used in the very beginning of Japji Sahib. These are *Reza* and *Hukm*. The former is a Persian word and means, "Will", and the latter is an Arabic word that means "Edict-Fiat". Many scholars of *Gurbani* have confused



the two words to mean the same thing: Command, which is fundamentally erroneous. God's entire *Leela* [Divine Sport] begins in Will, which is inscrutable. Edict-Fiat is the operative part of divine Will, with Name as an all-encompassing active creative Power.

Let me explain systematically the significance and magnificence of Guru Nanak's Revelation that he has described in his 974 hymns beginning with the *Mool Mantra* followed by *Japji Sahib*. What he says in the very **First Pauri** of *Japji Sahib* is an exhortation to the seeker to live in conscious deference for God's Edict-Fiat:

Kiv sachiaraan hovaiye kiv koorhe tute paal
Hukm-i-rezai chalna Nanak likkhiya naal
 How to be truthful; how could the wall of
 falsehood be demolished
 Says Nanak, to walk in the Edict-Fiat of (God)
 who is Master of His will
 Because His writ is what has come along since
 the dawn of life



Since God's Will is inscrutable, as noted before, only His Edict-Fiat can be sensed as manifest in the created universe and, therefore, ought to be obeyed in all *Humility*.

The Guru in the **Second Pauri** of *Japji Sahib* shows how Edict-Fiat is the operative part of God's Will:

Hukmi hovan aakaar hukm na kahiya
jaayi...Nanak hukme je bujhe taan haumain
kahe na koye

Though all forms come into existence by Edict-Fiat it is yet not possible to describe what it is ... and the Guru concludes the stanza to underscore the indispensability of Humility in the seeker's life, saying: *Nanak, if one has grasped the formidable power of God's Edict-Fiat one would be disabled into self-asserting one's knowledge.* In other words, such knowledge would make the knower *humble*.



This is a unique and subtle way of the Guru-Prophet of providing cues to the seeker to test for himself if he is on the right path. Though blatantly ignored by all and sundry, this point is of great significance in the light of the fact that he has pronounced *Shabda*, *not* a human being, to be the True Guru. Therefore, he is politely insisting that the seeker ought to use his own mind and judgement to figure out what is what: "*Akli sahib seivaiye...*" [Deploy your intelligence to serve the Lord...]

Third Pauri shows how different humans perceive the awesome Edict-Fiat of God differently according to their attitude and understanding, and express it in their own unique ways. Joyous response is in singing paeans to His Might and other divine attributes. The **Fourth Pauri** lays down the practical approach to the practice of what the seeker has grasped of Lord God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. God is True Lord whose language is infinite love and true too is His justice.

Gur Nanak has placed a very high price on an aspirant who would be an ideal devotee of the Divine. The prerequisite for treading the Path of Devotion is that he must first make covenant with death because it is Game of Love in which the first step is that the seeker carry his head on his palm to the street of Lord God.

*Je tau prem khelan ka chaou
Sir dhar tali gali mori aao*
Play, if you must, the Game of
Love—but be calm
On entering my street with your head
on your palm



In the **Fifth Pauri**, the Guru places the hard-earned wages of *Naam-* or *Shabda-Jaap* much


higher than idol worship and, by extreme civility, he asserts that neither can an image represent God nor can be installed like an idol in a temple. Contrast it with the Islamic belief that led the invaders to demolish countless Hindu temples in India, hurting the religious sentiments of millions of Hindus whose wounds are still unhealed even after centuries. In a similar vein in the **Sixth Pauri**, the Guru discountenances ritual bathing at centres of pilgrimage. God is not pleased with ceremonial piety that such bathers expect by a dip in so-called holy waters. Focus is on good deeds thereby highlighting the Pragmatic Spirituality that is a hallmark of the Sikh Faith. It was a widespread custom and belief among the Indian Yogis that if they had long life they would surely do something to attain God-realisation. Therefore, most of them did *Pranayam* [Breath Control in Yoga] studiously to prolong life, so much so that some of them are said to have lived hundreds of years. God grants Life, according to this theory, not by years, but by the number of breaths. If breaths could be economised, even stopped for long, or slowed down, the Yogi would have enormous longevity. Therefore, in the **Seventh Pauri**, Guru Nanak says that it is of no avail even if longevity were to accompany worldwide fame and political clout and much else of material acquisitions because all that would fall terribly short of the



merit of an ant that had never let itself forget God even for a single breath!

Eighth to Eleventh Pauris hail the value of listening to the Name for acquiring knowledge and spiritual merit. The point stressed is that such devotees as listen to the Holy Word [NAAM] are not only rid of worldly woes with their sins erased but also are always in progressive psycho-emotional bloom [*Nanak bhagtaan sada vigaas(u)/Suniai dookkh paap ka naas*].

In **Twelfth to Fifteenth Pauris**, Guru Nanak shows how faith deeply fixed in the mind yields immense power for the devotee. Each Pauri closes with a refrain that challenges the devotee to give the Guru's exhortation a fair trial:



*Aisa naam(u) niranjan(u) hoye
Je ko mann(i) jaane man(i) koye
God's Name is truly exalted and
uncontaminated by Maya and its kind
Only if an earnest seeker makes Naam-
contemplation habit of the mind*



The **Sixteenth Pauri** speaks of the result of the prescription given in the preceding eight Pauris. It assures that those devotees and NAAM-lovers who have listened to the Holy Name and firm-fixed it as unswerving faith in their minds, they

have progressed on the Spiritual Path to become seasoned saints. They are the savants who have the right beliefs because they have accepted as their Guru the Voice they hear of the *Wah-i-Guru* who dwells in their hearts.

In an unremitting state of joyous wonder, Guru Nanak in the **Eighteenth and Nineteenth Pauris** presents a pulsating picture of such countless mortals as are struggling to tread the Path of *Dharma* and Righteousness. This he follows up when he talks of those countless persons who, under the influence of pervert thoughts and socio-cultural vices, are villainously busy in turning this world into a hell for others.

In **Nineteenth Pauri**, the Guru in his infinite mercy has demonstrated how he views the hero and villain as equals because they are children of the same Father, Lord God. While doing so, he has expanded his canvas to paint how countless regions and worlds, many among which are inaccessible, bear the stamp of the NAAM because each one of them is His creation.

Prophet-Guru Nanak excels other religious leaders in revealing to the wonderstruck reader of *Gurbani* the immensity of creation at the cosmic scale. Nevertheless, then, he confesses, as an inner compulsion of *Humility* of which he is an unmatched paragon, that even the word 'countless' that he has used to describe the Divine Immensity is a burden on the mind.


However, its use is unavoidable because without using words he cannot communicate to seekers of Truth the exalted mystical experience that his Revelation has provided him. Interestingly, he says that he who has written these ‘words’ [alluding to creation of a myriad forms] his forehead is free from their *finite* stamp. When we use words to describe sun, earth, etc, the stars and planets become *words* in a manner of speaking. If these are words, then, their writer cannot be anyone other than Lord God. Therefore, by implication, words can describe everything but *not* their Creator.

The inference is that all the creatures, good and bad, are God’s own appellations. However, it does not at all mean that creatures, notably, a conscious being like Man, are exempt from the moral responsibility and social accountability of the consequences of their deeds. Everyone, without exception, is responsible and accountable for his or her deeds and misdeeds. It is thus axiomatic: “As you sow so shall you reap”. Pronouncing this Cosmic Moral Law, Guru Nanak deals with questions of cleanliness and ceremonial piety. Dust-laden hands, feet, and body’s other limbs can be washed clean by water. Dirt-stained clothes need soap [*Saaboon*] as detergent for cleansing the garments. Incidentally, Guru Nanak was the first Prophet to use the word “*Saaboon*” in *Gurbani* as an apt and intelligible metaphor.

As is his wont, the Guru approaches each problem systematically, beginning with the concrete and comprehensible because such an example is available in everyday life. Therefore, using it as a launching pad, the Guru takes the devotee on a spiritual flight to farthest reaches of the cosmic void. He thus goes on to say that, in a similar way, when sins pollute the mind no soap except the detergent of Holy *NAAM* can cleanse it. Virtues and vices are not mere words. The kind of deed man does leave their imprint on the psyche, which as tendency goes with the soul to the next world in deference for the Law of “As you sow so shall you reap”. In addition, according to God’s Edict-Fiat and on the basis your *karmas*, you would remain entrapped in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth—endlessly.

In the **Twenty-First Pauri**, the Guru avers that liberation from the unfavourable results of indiscreet activities, visit to centres of pilgrimage, penance, etc can be helpful provided such indulgences have at their core the Holy Name because it is the highest and most efficacious method. Through *Naam*-contemplation, the divine attributes are to be absorbed in the psyche by focused chanting of Lord God’s primary attributes of Truth [*Satyam*], Beauty [*Sundaram*], and Goodness [*Shivam*]. Whoever has listened to, and fixed in mind, God’s virtues and loved Him with all heart has indeed bathed in the





68 Centres of Pilgrimage within his own being. All forms of worship are in vain if, while doing so, you have not been able to imbibe divine qualities. The Guru has listed a whole lot of spiritual practices but among them, he has cautioned in a convincing way that if you are bogged down by questions of when, why, and how the universe was created you are wasting an enormously precious human life because these cannot be answered by anyone except the Creator Himself. He says if the Pandit knew he would have recorded the date in the Hindu scriptures, and if the Muslim judge were aware, he would have put it in the Holy Quran. In summary, the Guru declares that God is great, and so is his magnificence, and whatever is happening is in deference for His Edict-Fiat. However, if someone claims, based on his personal intelligence, knowledge of the whys and wherefores of the divine drama, he would have to regret it in the afterlife.

The Guru reiterates the subject matter of the previous Pauri is here [Twenty-Second Pauri] by proclaiming that there are lakhs of universes, netherworlds and skies, so numerous that those who set out to count them have dropped dead, tired without any success. Therefore, he says that if that were the truth one should admit that the Creator Himself knows the secret, no one else. It is noteworthy that when in the fifteenth

century Guru Nanak made such a proclamation, which nobody has rebutted so far, the West that prides itself on its scientific findings nothing of significance had happened in the world except that Columbus discovered America by default. It substantiates my view that knowledge of the Cosmos comes by God's grace through Revelation that is essentially mystic experience [direct perception] *not* scientific understanding of the phenomenal world by observation, measurement, and laboratory experiment. Ironically, however, such esoteric knowledge—that yet remains unknown to and unacknowledged by, schools, colleges, and universities—dawns readily on the unlettered and innocent souls chosen by Lord God as His Messengers, notably, Prophet Muhammad.

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, do not measure up 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 by mundane means, 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 an "Unknowability-and-the-Mind's-curiosity-to-know" syndrome would strike the intellect-dependent Man as self-contradictory. However, the difficulty presents itself only when one places more premiums on the need to *prove* a point to another rather than on the urge to *probe* the problem 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 Guru has described his experience 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 invisible. Many yearn to know His Extent, yet it forever eludes them. Who knows His Limit? The more one explains it the further it beggars description. God is the Supreme Master: Exalted is His Station—Supreme, above all, is His NAAM. 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 issue 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 mortally stricken with greed, to the lot of many falls endless suffering and penury—Bountiful Lord! This too we should accept as Your Gift.



*This proclamation 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 to take 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*.

The remaining verse reads as under:

God grants bondage in transmigration or liberation as pleases Him, without anyone’s intercession whatsoever. If some reprobate were to attempt divulging this Supreme Secret, bitter shame shall come his way. God alone knows what each one receives, and He dispenses it. However, few ever confess to this underlying Truth. The Boon of His Adoration the Lord selectively bestows—and the fortunate beneficiary should be acknowledged as the King of kings, says Nanak.

We should note the value attached to unflinching devotion to God, as a rare Divine Grace. 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 otherworldly speculation. It is replete with the matter-of-factness of this world. This text reads:

God's Attributes are invaluable, and so 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 hallmark 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 make erudite commentaries. Brahmas and Indras attempt [the Mythical milkmaids and the celestial cowherd], Shiva, and the Supreme Yogis, and 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. Here the Guru is alluding to what the scientists now perceive to be an 'Expanding Universe'.

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 sounds but I hold it to be true that this Unwritten Law of the WHOLE being 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, imbued 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 resembles—enthroned, where God



watches and sustains All Creation? Innumerable are the instruments, the notes, the players who laud Him. Countless the musical modes and the symphonies, and the musicians orchestrating His panegyrics: Air, Water, and 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. Moreover, 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 NAAM. 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 pleases You comes to pass, none can command You, O Lord; You are King of kings. May Your Will always be my life's mainstay!

It is important to note two salient points 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 life-alienated 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, Page 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 (flourished 2nd century

BCE or 5th century CE), showing the means of emancipation of the soul from further transmigrations/incarnations, and obtaining union with the Supreme Being. It purports to cultivate strict physical 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. In addition, then, as is truly exceptional of his Creative Mysticism, the Guru offers an apt alternative by transforming the yogic paraphernalia into a metaphor of mindset 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 be your earrings
Modesty your begging-bowl and pouch
Smear your Mind with the ashes of
contemplation
From realisation of mortality, fashion
your quilt



In addition, 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, an earnest seeker 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*. 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
He holds sway over the whole Universe
Misguided ambition prompts the desire
 For miraculous powers
The universal system is regulated by
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


[However, 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/self-monitoring 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 muster and match—much less outdo. Because The Creator is Perennially True/Real, all His Creation must necessarily be True/Real, too. Hence, the Guru Nanak'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 NAAM 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's 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 note 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, yet 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 the Guru's 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*, which I have added to the traditional centuries-old triad as 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 NAAM 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
Then, in their midst, installed the Moral Inn:
Earth
Wherein dwell beings and species
Of myriad hues, forms, and lifestyles
Of names many and 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 sifting of the genuine from the
 fake is done
 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 he 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 NAAM-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, yet 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, an 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-surrender to receive Divine Grace. Until that prospect 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 continents 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 in this awesome delineation 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 Nanak'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 Vagabond Soul that urges it to retrace its footsteps 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 the Guru's Grace falls upon them, it may impel them to change their evaluation for their own 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 now 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
And 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

God watches over His Infinite Creation
 In Blissful Progression
 And reflects upon All, Eternally
 So hard is its description, Nanak
 That it is 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 had 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 Shabda’s Transforming Power: “*Kiv sachiara hoiai kiv kurhai tutai pal(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 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 everything to 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 Progenitor
The Good Earth, Mother of All
Day and Night are nurses, caressing
the entire Creation
The Righteous Judge reckons merit
and demerit of
Everyone
His approval or rejection comes
from each one's own
Actions
Those who, meditating on God, have
earned merit
Through an unremitting moral endeavour
Saith Nanak, Their faces irradiate Divine Light
Through them, many shall their
final release find



As especially enshrined in Japuji, Guru Nanak's *Bani* substantiates the noteworthy fact that Religion, grounded in *Dharma* (The Cosmic Moral Law), is the *Architecture of Total Human Consciousness*, integrating Soul, Mind, and Body, in every individual human person as an

active agent of Pragmatic Spirituality. Accordingly, the seeker is inspired to develop it *creatively* and *holistically* through everyday work as a Householder—living through the thick and thin of life, and *not* as an ascetic who has retired to the forests—for psycho-emotional escape from the mind-marauding vicissitudes of workaday existence.



CONCLUDING REMARKS ON JAPUJI SAHIB

In Pauri 36, Guru Nanak describes the state of the earnest seeker who has put the Guru's Word into practice during workaday existence with religious zeal and unremitting fervour. However, in Pauri 37, an exquisitely sculpted soul-consciousness belongs to him. Here, he is the rare one who has become God's complete and perfect servant whose very lifestyle is constant involvement in socially beneficent action, so much so that even during sleep he is engaged in it. To my reckoning, no surer and simpler measure of progress on the Spiritual Journey could be furnished than that the beneficiary of Guru's grace continually dreams of improving his methods of service to humankind in every way possible.

What is the reason? Man's mind conditioned by notions of worldly transactions measured in

profit and loss goes to bed with all mortal fears and anxieties so that his thoughts even in dreams remain in the hectic mode of 24x7.

The stated test is surer and simpler because in sleep no one has any control on the kind of dreams that he has or will have. Only a clean mind can have divine dreams of Soul-Bride's spiritual communion with Divine Husband. Mind attains such a state only when it is completely freed from conscious control that continually deploys all tricks of the trade to maintain a good and socially acceptable demeanour at all costs, in spite of the person's chronic malice towards others that persists in tandem with total misalignment of his thoughts, words, and deeds. In other words, the seeker who has attained such an exalted consciousness absolutely stands in no need of goading by anyone for enthusiastic engagement with Spiritual Realities. His heart is full to the brim with Guru-awakened psycho-spiritual self-renewing energy. A stage before this one, he was only a *Gyani* [learned]; at this advanced stage, he is a *Bhagat* [devotee] too. Now this servant of God is learned and devotee at the same time, in the same person.

The highest soul-consciousness described above had its sound foundation in flawless character and conduct that comes into being because of focused and studious sculpting by the Guru-guided devotee of the finest kind such as a



goldsmith achieves with tenacity, unwavering attention, and consummate skill. The goldsmith puts the yellow metal in fire; builds up the temperature to the required degree; then applies the masterly skills of the art and craft of gold smithy. It is such a state of superlative ethereality that NAAM (God's Holy Name), which is the cause of extreme heights of spiritual attainment, finds it fit and receptacle to dwell in. When the foundation of life gets reinforced beyond

collapse, by unerring moral conduct steeped in Truth, [Guru Nanak Dev calls the blessed seeker "Sachiar"] and he chants NAAM enabling his soul-consciousness [*Surt*] to scale such Wuthering heights that the seeker and the sought become inseparably ONE. At this stage, Man has become God from whose Being the Holy Word [*Shabda*] erupts as if it were lava of nectar erupted from an inexhaustible divine volcano 🌿

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8



JAPUJI

POETIC RENDERING

BY

THE AUTHOR



Translation was not taken very seriously and never considered ‘creative’ until the English poet and writer Edward Fitzgerald (31 March 1809 - 14 June 1883) published his English translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London, 1859). He did the job with such consummate exquisiteness and trans-cultural understanding of the Persian and English languages that translation thenceforth began to be acknowledged as a work of literary art. All sceptics and cynics were silenced to speechlessness, so much so that since then there has hardly been an anthology of English poetry that does not feature his

translation of the quatrains originally penned in Persian by the world-famous astronomer-poet of Persia [modern Iran].

As a teenager I was myself so deeply influenced by Omar Khayyam *via* Edward Fitzgerald that I wrote scores of quatrains in English, to begin with. Later on, when I got interested in Urdu, I learnt the language, its poetry, prosody, and criticism so studiously that over the next 50 years I mastered the art to produce over 3,000 *Rubaiyat* under my pen-name [Takhallus] *T’ameer Chandigarhi* [which denotes an architect who lives in Chandigarh].

Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi has conferred on me the *Best Book of the Year 2019 Award* for my anthology of 1540 Urdu quatrains titled *Shu'oor-i-Bekhudi* [Knowledge of the Unconscious Self] in the category of Urdu Poetry. Since 1969, I have made creation, criticism, and translation a habit of the mind—and translated poetry in Urdu and Punjabi into English and vice versa.

Poetic Rendering in English of Japuji that follows is the result of such an exercise which I keep doing as a delightful pastime with undiminished passion. Interestingly, translation prods me on to explore the languages concerned beneath their obvious differences down to their cultural and artistic nuances steeped in cosmic correspondences thereby deepening my understanding of the Sacred Word when the subject happens to be Religion, Spirituality, and Mysticism.

Let me hope that the translation given here in metered and rhymed verse gives my readers enough excitement to look at *Gurbani* in a new light and with heightened creedal fervour—inspiring them to reorient their soul-consciousness [*Surt*] towards Spiritual Journey via the Sacred Word [*Shabda*].

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

*

Contemplating His Glory by a ceaseless Chant

**

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

PAURI-ONE

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 Who's Master
of His Will"
Is the Inviolable Divine Writ, the one Revealed in
Original!

PAURI-TWO

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

PAURI-THREE

Some who are so endowed, His might eulogise
For some adorers, His blessings are what
His power symbolise
Some sing the praises of His beautiful
virtues and traits
Many another through metaphysics
His nature contemplates
Some sing of Him as the Author of life
and death
Some admire His power of infusing
into the dead new breath
Some sing of Him as the One so palpably near
Some sing of Him as He who is
distant, unclear
There's no dearth of reckonings, or descriptions sane
Millions, nay, countless have tried but in vain
The Giver goes on giving, but out the
takers tire
In aeons of births getting what all they desire
God runs the Universe by His
Inexorable Decree
In joyous progression, Nanak,
He—The Carefree



PAURI-FOUR

Unchanging is the Sire, True His justice, His
language love infinite
We only ask and implore—and so
graciously He gives it
What can we offer the Giver for a
glimpse of His court
How prayers must be worded to melt His heart
Meditate on the True Name's glory in the
ambrosial hours
Good deeds beget good life, but salvation
His grace confers
The Omnipotent is All-Holy, Nanak avers

PAURI-FIVE

Who can make His idol, who knows the norm
He who's form, form-giver, yet beyond all form
For him, who serves Him, all honour ensues
Sing of Him, Nanak, that mine-field of virtues
Sing and hearken, and, in heart, a longing nurture
To let sorrows quit, and joys to enter
Guru's Word is the mystic sound, the
Vedas: It's all-pervasive
Guru is God, Gorakh, Brahma, and Parvati:
The Goddess
Even knowing it, I couldn't have this Truth vouched
How could the Ineffable in speech be couched
May I, with Guru's grace, be ever so blest
That this Benefactor-of-All I mayn't forget

PAURI-SIX

A holy bath takes he who earns His approval
Sans God's sanction, all actions are offal
Wherever, through all the worlds, have I sought
Sans good deeds, everything comes to nought
Gems and jewels in his mind can be found
If the seeker hearkens The Word's mystic sound
May I, with Guru's grace, be ever so blest
That this Benefactor-of-All I mayn't forget

PAURI-SEVEN

A life as long as Yugas four
Even ten times as much, if one were to get
In all the nine continents be very well known
Had countless followers at one's behest
If one could earn a glorious name
And highest honour as one's asset
But if one were of His grace deprived
Hopeless, hapless, would one be, yet
One amid a swarm of wriggling worms
Forever confined to the filth of sin
Nanak, He alone bestows virtue on the virtueless
And endows the good with the wealth of goodness
Who can think of anyone who ever could
Bless the Lord Himself with immaculate good

PAURI-EIGHT

Hearkening bestows on the seeker all
powers supernatural
Hearkening reveals the secrets of the earth,
the sky, and the Mythical Bull
Hearkening unravels mysteries of isles, regions,
nether lands
Hearkening death's invincible power disbands
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-NINE

Hearkening gives the devotee the formidable
powers of Trinity
Hearkening, to the meanest, imparts Divinity
Hearkening reveals the praxis, body's secrets,
and the power of Yoga
Hearkening equals the knowledge of Shastras,
Smritis, and the Vedas
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-TEN

Hearkening unfolds the truth, knowledge, and bliss
Hearkening equals ritual bathing at sixty-eight holy
places
Hearkening, all the honour of learning, begets
Hearkening, one always easily meditates
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-ELEVEN

Hearkening, one can through rivers of virtues wade
Hearkening, one is a *pir* or an apostle made
Hearkening, the blind find their path hurdle-free
Hearkening, they fathom life's abyss easily
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-TWELVE

Who can talk of the unique bliss of sound belief
All such trying shall always come to grief
Where is the paper, the scribe, and where's the pen?
The believer's state-of-mind beggars all description
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

STEP THIRTEEN

Awaken'd are the believer's mind, intellect,
consciousness
To the entire Cosmic Mystery does he gain access
The believer in his life never cuts a sorry figure
Nor does death even bother a staunch believer
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known



PAURI-FOURTEEN

The believer's path is from obstacles free
The believer shall be honoured exclusively
The believer is never in sects and cults stranded
The believer's faith is on Righteousness founded
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-FIFTEEN

The doors of deliverance on the believer open
The believer's kith and kin, too, get salvation
Safe the believer lands, and, with him,
an entire congregation
When, from the cycle of births, the believer
attains salvation
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-SIXTEEN

Elect are they, among humans esteemed,
who God prefers
And, in His court, on them, high honour confers
The God-loved are welcome at His door, and
embellish His court
The True One is their Guru on whom they
have set their heart
Man can't, do what he will, Creator's
endless state fathom
His Creation will forever remain beyond him
On whose horns toils this earth, in *Dharma*,

they say

God's-Mercy-Begot, does infinite contentment display
The truthful alone may this secret know eventually
That the Mythical Bull can't such
staggering loads carry
When there are earths beyond earth,
many more beyond this world
By whose power are they supported and into
space twirled
A myriad species are there, and their
countless aspects
Lord's ever-moving pen has scribed complete
in all respects
Who can write, who, for this staggering count, account
Because most certainly this would be a mind-
boggling count
No one knows the limit of His powers divine
How superb are all His forms sublime
A single Word and Lo! Myriads of worlds
came into being
At His command rivers of life in millions
started flowing
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to offer Thee a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable,
Formless One

PAURI-SEVENTEEN

Countless recite His Name, and countless love Him
Countless adore Him, as countless penance
Countless from the Scriptures and the Vedas recite
Countless practise yoga, and remain saddened hence
Countless devotees on His Excellence-
Omniscience meditate
Countless are pious souls, and countless
in giving charity elate
Countless crusaders brave the arch-enemies' weaponry
Countless think in silence ceaselessly of Thee
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to offer Thee a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable,
Formless One

PAURI-EIGHTEEN

Countless fools see but mindlessly
Countless thieves thrive on ill-gotten money
Countless despots with their might oppress
Countless cut-throats shed blood and suppress
Countless are the sinners who depart in sinning
Countless are the liars who're always lying
Countless perverts subsists on ill-pretence
Countless back-bite and burden their conscience
Nanak, the lowliest of all the known lowly
After deep thought makes this humble homily
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable,
Formless One

PAURI-NINETEEN

Countless are Thy Names, Thy abodes countless
Countless are Thy realms impossible of access
Saying even countless is a burden like that of sin
Yet without words one can't Name Him,
much less adore Him
Through words one gains wisdom, and sings
of His mysterious ways
Through the language of words one writes
and his ideas conveys
With words is destiny on everyone's forehead writ
But who could on the Divine writer's
forehead write it?
As He ordains, so one's lot one would get
Over the whole expanse of creation
extends His Name
Beyond His Name lies there not a single domain
I haven't got the power to fathom or to surmise
Not am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye, immutable,
Formless One



PAURI-TWENTY

Dirt-smeared hands, feet, or the body
Can be washed clean with water
And if it be soiled laundry
Clean would it with soap launder
But when the mind is with the filth of sins smeared
By the dye of God's-Name alone can it be cleared
Mere saying makes nobody a saint or a sinner
Deeds are man-making seeds whose account is kept
by the Maker
One must reap as one sows
By His Edict-Fiat, Nanak, one comes and goes

PAURI-TWENTYONE

Pilgrimage, penance, mercy, and charity
Give him a whit of fruit—but how proud is he!
Who, hearkening, believes—and nurtures God's love
Taken in the mind a holy dip to cleanse the inner core
All virtues are Thine, no worth have I got
Yet, sans imbibing virtues, devotion is naught
Self-Existent are Thou, and, among Thy creation
Are Brahma, matter, and the Holy Word
Truth, Beauty, and Eternal Love are Thine
Our salutations to Thee, O Immaculate Lord
What time was it, which era, what day, and date
Which season, which month, when the cosmos
Thou did create
The Puranas would this corroborative evidence bear
If the pundits has at all this secret known
And the Qazi's knowledge in the Koran's exegesis
find mention
But the yogi, nor anyone else, knows the date, the
month, or the season
This exclusive secret is known, indeed, to
none other than God
The Lord-Creator of all creation
How do I say it, how adore Him, how describe,
how I know?
There's no dearth of those, Nanak each
cleverer than the rest
Who claim to have this esoteric knowledge, though!
Great is the Lord God, supreme His justice
Whatever He ordains must come to pass
Nanak, the egotist can only of this knowledge
brag—at best
But never shall he be welcome at His portals, alas!



PAURI-TWENTYTWO

Nether are the regions beyond numberless
nether lands
Countless are the skies beyond the heavens
and The Sky
Unfathomed is the depth of cosmos,
unmeasured height
The Vedas have in reckoning tired and so have I
The Semitic texts speak of eighteen thousand spheres
Yet point to one basic truth this paltry count must
Everything springs from His Being—which,
un-reckoned, one again swears
Then, in a state of utter helplessness, returns to dust
Therefore, Nanak, suffice it to say that
all human futility shows
That He is great—yes, but how great?—
God alone knows

PAURI-TWENTYTREE


Adoring Him, as they do, the devotees are yet
ignorant of His glory
Can the rivers fathom it as they trail back
into the sea
Holding mounds of wealth and dominions
vaster than the sea
Even the mightiest emperors can't match a
tiny ant's worth
In whose heart has God's immaculate
love taken birth

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's 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, 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



PAURI-TWENTYFIVE



Who could assize Lord God's grace
That matchless Benefactor sans all avarice
Of Him the world's high and might beg at His door
Beyond all reckoning remains their
 staggering number
How many are ill-fated, sinners, bad men
Wallowing in evil whose lives sadly lessen
How many are such who receive but deny
How many fools and gluttons eat on the sly
 How many are those who forever
 starve and languish
But this, too, is a gift, Lord, of Thine
 own sweet wish
Willed by Thee is human bondage, and
 release ordained
Foolish is he who with Thee fault does find
With one blow of fate back he comes to his mind
God alone knows what to give and Himself gives He
Yet a rare one acknowledges this truth gracefully
The boon of His adoration such power brings
 As makes His chosen one, Nanak,
 the King of Kings

PAURI-TWENTYSIX

Priceless are Thy qualities, Thy business is priceless
Priceless are Thy warehouses, and
 Thy men of business
Priceless are the sellers and buyers in this enterprise
Priceless are Thy rates, and priceless is the merchandise
Priceless is Thy court, and priceless righteousness
Priceless is every measure, and the deal struck priceless
Priceless is Thy benefaction, and priceless Thy seal
Beyond reckoning are Thy Commandments,
 beyond limit Thy weal
Without an infinite yardstick the priceless
 can't be assessed
The meek who do venture are with
 Thy adoration blessed
On the pages of Holy Books, and through
 countless inscriptions
Thy glory is set out in discourses,
 and descriptions
Brahma and Indra of Thy glory ever sing
Sing, too, all the Gopis and their Govind
Iskra praises Thee and so, too, miracle men
And how many Buddhas adore Thee can't be known
Hymns of Thy praise are sung by many a
 god and demon
And by seers and sages, devotees, and holy men
How many are born to sing of Thy glory
How many have come and gone helplessly
If as many more were to sing Thy praises evermore
No points in Thy reckoning could they ever score
 As He wills so His stature grows
Nanak, His secrets only the True One knows
He who claims to know them commits calumny
Mark him not a boor, but a leader of many

PAURI-TWENTYSEVEN

What's His abode like, whence He does
His business carry
From where does He oversee and sustain
all His creation

Countless melodies are struck of a staggering variety
And countless minstrels always sing in heady elation
Many are the musical measures which praise Thee
With celestial bards singing to the tunes in harmony
Air, water, fire express Thy glory in charming music
Dharamraja's tunes are also profoundly mystic
Chitra Gupta keeps record of all actions human
For *Dharamraja* to adjudicate thereon
Sing of Thee *Isar*, *Brahma*, and *Parvati*
All of them created and blessed by Thee
Seated on his throne, Indra bows to Thee in singing
Engrossed in the very midst of many a godling
Miracle men sing of Thee entranced in *Samadhi*
The saints, in singing, fix their thoughts on Thee
The celibate, the virtuous, and the
contented—one and all
Pay obeisance to Thee as do the valiant heroes too
Scholars of the Vedas and the great sages extol
Thee, O Lord, age aft age—the ages through
Exalted, too, are Thou by bewitching maids
From heavens, earths, and the nether hades
Praised are Ye by all the gems Thou did create
And so by the places of pilgrimage, in all sixty-eight
By all the four modes of life-generation
Thy Name is kept in external glorification

All terrestrial regions and celestial spheres
Thou all the cosmos forever reveres
And in so doing are they themselves sustained
They alone have the privilege of singing of Thy glory
Who have first Thy choicest blessings obtained
And thus deeply steeped abide in the love of Thee
Just how many more, Nanak, also sing of God
Are beyond my imagination's wildest flight
He alone is eternal, unchanging Lord
His Name remains true—beyond all spite
He has authored all this vast creation, He
Is, has always been, and forever shall be
Having created beings of many hues and kinds
As enchanting *Maya* of supreme physical beauty
God looks after His grand handiwork, as He minds
The cosmic business, and sustains it by
His gracious decree
Whatever pleases Him, happens—and has His nod
King of Kings is the Sole Lord God
And inviolable is His Edict-Fiat
Nanak's own life is propped by it



PAURI- TWENTYEIGHT

Wear you the ear-rings of deep contentment
And make dignity of labour your begging-bowl
Let meditation be the holy ash to smear
your physique
Make intimation of morality the virgin whole
And faith in One God the mendicant's staff
Remember, none of the countless sects is
exclusive-unique
Except that the cult of love is the only true religion
And triumph over the world is actually a mind
self-won
Ceaseless salutation to Him is a devotee's holy gesture
Who is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice,
Imperishable
And, in all ages, appear in unchanging vesture

PAURI- TWENTYNINE

Knowledge is out diet, dispensed by compassion
Divine sound makes music in every breast
God, the Absolute Master, holds
sway o'er all creation
Worldly riches and miraculous powers
have a misleading taste
Union and separation together run the
universal industry
The balance-sheet of good deeds and evil casts
human destiny
Ceaseless salutation to Him is a devotee's holy gesture
He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice,
Imperishable
And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI-THIRTY

The Primal Mother in wedlock with Brahma bore
Three active regents: Creator, Provider,
and Destroyer
As the Lord God wills so He guides them all
According to His sovereign edict-fiat
While He watches o'er them, He remains invisible
Mysterious! Isn't this marvellous act?
Ceaseless salutations to Him is a devotee's
holy gesture
He is the First Cause, Unhued,
Beyond-Voice, Imperishable
And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI-THIRTYONE

The Lord's seat and His stores in all realms exist
Inexhaustible are they, though he filled
them only once
He watches o'er all creation as He does persist
Nanak, just is God's dispensing munificence
Ceaseless salutations to Him is a devotee's
holy gesture
He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice,
Imperishable
And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI- THIRTYTWO

Were man's one tongue to multiply into one lakh,
and thence

Become twenty times over as many at that
Were each tongue to move a hundred thousand
times in utterance

Of God's Holy Name, forever aiming at
Unrelenting, uninterrupted, devotional remembrance
Treading this path, he would keep climbing
His stairs

Till his 'self' dissolves into Lord's quintessence
Tales of saint's glorious ascent won't catch unawares
Even the worms—to follow suit with
devotion, thence

Truth is revealed, Nanak, by God's own grace
Though the self-avowed brag of alternative ways

STEP THIRTY-THREE

Speech can't compel nor silence ever force
Begging doesn't avail nor is giving going to matter
One may choose to live or to death take recourse
Neither rule can succeed nor treasure
nor mind's chatter

Nor power can ever dwell in the consciousness
Awakened by knowledge and contemplation
Neither does it abide in the scheming duress
Of accomplished escape from all creation
God alone has the might which from
His own hands flow
In His eyes, Nanak, none is high nor any who's low

PAURI-THIRTYFOUR

Nights, seasons, occasions, and days, He made
And air, water, fire, and the nether region
Then, in the midst of them, He Himself laid
Earth—as the mint of righteous action
Where dwell creatures of many a shape and hue
Their names are myriad, their numbers
beyond mention

All mortals are judged keeping their deeds in view
True is the Creator, true His holy mansion
There abide The Elect of God divinely charming
There the Lord's gracious glance does
His approval confirm
There true from the false is sifted in final reckoning
One's true worth will be known, Nanak, in the
world to come



PAURI-THIRTYFIVE

The Realm of Righteous Action abides in
the stated way

Next is the Realm of Knowledge which
enchants by its working

There many forms of air, water, fire which hold sway

There countless *Krishnas* and *Shivas*
have their dwelling

Numberless *Brahmas* are fashioning worlds, et al

Of many a form, colour, and bodily-ware

Many a karmic earth exists, many a mount celestial

Many a sermon is delivered to *Dhruva* out there

Many are the Indras, many the spheres
of moons and suns

Many are the continents, and the lands galore

Many are the accomplished yogis, supreme ascetics,
enlightened ones

Many are the incarnations of
Mother Goddess evermore

Many are the species of gods, demons, celibates

Many are the oceans which gems produce

Many a mode is there which creatures creates

Many are the languages which they all use

There is many a lineage down which kings descend

Many are God's devotees engrossed in serving him

But none of them, Nanak, knows any end

PAURI-THIRTYSIX

The Realm of Knowledge is where
illumination holds sway

And mystic melody reigns amid sublime visions
and wonder

Enchanting beauty pervades the Realm
of Endeavour

Where matchless forms are forged everyday

So unique is their beauty that it
beggars all description

Whoever attempts it would be left speechless,
ashamed of his antics

Fashioned in that realm are absorption, wisdom,
and mind's illumination

Forged therein are the visions of innumerable
gods and mystics



PAURI-THIRTYSEVEN

Might is the hallmark of the Realm of Grace
Where no one lives except heroes of might supreme
An endowment received through constant
God-consciousness
Many Sita-like heroines are there of
surpassing esteem
Those who are with God in constant communion
Never suffer mortality or anybody's guile
Dwell in there devotees assembled from
many a dominion
Cherishing true bliss in their hearts all the while
The Realm of Truth is where God himself reposes
And casts His gracious glance, always watching o'er
That realm houses all the continents and universes
Whose limits nobody can by any means even explore
Abide in that realm all forms of worlds of creation
Untiring a-whirl in submission to His will
God sees them, enjoys them, in divine elation
To describe its limits, Nanak, is a task uphill

PAURI-THIRTYEIGHT

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 them the divine Word
They 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



EPILOGUE

[Sloku]

Air is the spiritual guide, subtle his worth
Water like father sires everything
That's borne by the great mother earth
The whole world plays without tiring
Looked after by day and night: the two nurses
The court of moral law is forever
Taking note of all virtues and vices
Accountable for his own actions is each creature
More by token, some are granted nearness (to You)
Others, who are kept at bay, embroil
Meditation on the Holy Name blesses humans' toil
Their faces glow, Nanak, others with them are
liberated, too



ALTERNATIVE RENDERING

EPILOGUE

[Sloku]

Subtle as the air is the path-finder, and
water does sire
Everything, borne by Mother Earth, the intellect
Day and night engage this world entire
As male and female nurses, in life's playful act
All virtues and vices are accounted at the Court
Of Cosmic Moral Law, whereby all mortals
On the merit of their deeds, in the divine sport
Move close to, or, away from, His portals
Those, who meditate on the Holy Name, receive
God's exclusive benefaction
Deliverance illumines their faces, Nanak, even as
they secure others' salvation





9



OTHER DIMENSIONS OF DIVINITY

Apart from being deep, wide, and all-encompassing, Guru Nanak Dev's Revelation defies any strict classification in terms of subject-matter or issues covered by it because of its nature that is essentially universal and timeless. Although I have tried some categorisation in various Sections which carry the Contents of this book yet I found myself rather undecided in certain respects as whatever subsequently came to my mind after studious investigation of the Guru's 974 *Shabads* I found the matter to be of equal importance to whatever is carried in the ones from which I have quoted. However, when adding them to the Sections already developed became somewhat problematic, I thought it befitting to create another Section that I have titled "Other Dimensions of Divinity". As you will soon discover the matter contained in here is a Miscellany rather than easily classifiable

containment. My purpose, however, stands fulfilled in that my desire to give you exposure to a few more gems of the Guru's Revelation offer thought-provoking reading, leading to listening, reflection, and contemplation.

Your brain has memory of 2.5 petabytes (or a million gigabytes). For comparison, if your brain worked like a digital video recorder in a television, 2.5 petabytes would be enough to hold three million hours of TV shows. You would have to leave the TV running continuously for more than 300 years to use up all that storage.

Three decades ago someone had calculated the size of the mainframe computer to simulate the human brain. It worked out to be the Empire State Building in New York, America, cooled by Niagara Falls! The Empire State Building is a 102-Storey Art Deco Skyscraper in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. The Canadian



Horseshoe Falls have vertical plunge of 57 metres (188 feet) to the river below. The height of the American Falls from top to the talus (rock) below at the base is 21 to 34 metres (70 to 110 feet).

Using the open-source software NEST, the scientists simulated a network consisting of 1.73 billion nerve cells connected by 10.4 trillion synapses. To realize this feat, the program recruited 82,944 processors of the K Computer and used 1 petabyte of memory. The process took 40 minutes, to complete the simulation of 1 second of neuronal network activity in real, biological, time. Although the simulated network is huge, it only represents 1% of the neuronal network in the brain. K is a peta-scale supercomputer, so, we need an exa-scale machine to completely simulate the whole human brain.

Rasa is a Sanskrit word with several connotations like “essence”, “taste”, or “flavour”; literally, “sap” or “juice”, and denotes the Indian concept of aesthetic flavour, an essential element of any work of visual, literary, or performing art that can only be suggested, not described. It is a kind of contemplative abstraction in which the inwardness of human feelings suffuses the surrounding world of embodied forms to sprout in the seeker’s heart as an uplifting psychosomatic experience that Guru Nanak had called “*Naam Khumari*”—an unremitting divine euphoria in *Sahj*.

Since all that we experience in everyday life results from Consciousness [sensing a certain flavour or a mix of two or more], *Rasas*’ scale lies along the spinal column. Therefore, lower down the navel is the most intense *Rasa* of LIBIDO [Sigmund Freud’s term for ‘sexual impulse’ that he also called ‘Life wish’] that is responsible for biological reproduction. Accordingly, the *Rasas* on the scale higher than the navel relate to a progressive ascent of Soul-Consciousness [*Surt*] towards Spiritual Realities that it has to achieve by piercing the *Chakras* [Very subtle vital energy centres] on its way. At the highest stage occurs what I call “Spiritual Resurrection”—instant illumination caused by the Mind woken up from inordinately long and deep sleep of previous births. At each centre, however, the experience is of a different *Rasa*. Reaching the *Dasam Dwar* [Tenth Door] that cannot be accessed by any means or might except the Guru’s guidance, the Soul finally reaches and lodges in its home Guru Nanak has called *Sach Khand*, Realm of Truth, God’s Abode, entirely architected by Divine Light.

MIND is a complex of many varied vibrations of different frequencies restlessly at work 24x7 throughout the mortal life-span of three scores and ten [conventional figure of 70 years]. Though socio-culturally endowed software of the Human Computer its febrile functioning veers round

what we call the Five Inner Foes: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride.

Since all our unending problems including those we foolishly seek to solve through World Wars spring from these redoubtable enemies, Guru Nanak has stated the problem which has been with Humanity since its advent on Planet Earth and its (unexpected) solution with a flourish of finality in his proclamation:

Mani jeetai jagu jeetu

Triumph over Mind is Victory of the World.

[Third Line of Pauri-28 of Japuji Sahib]

Famous Austrian psychoanalyst and neurologist, Sigmund Freud, hailed as the Father of Modern Psychology, popularised the concept of the Unconscious Mind and believed that it was a repository of thoughts, memories, feelings, etc., which our Conscious Mind is reluctant to accept. His theory of personality divided the human mind into three levels: the Conscious (10%), Subconscious (50 - 60%), and Unconscious (30 - 40%) minds. He also propounded the theory of *Pleasure Principle* and *Reality Principle* which, in familiar terms, means the desire for immediate gratification versus the deferral of that gratification, respectively. He proposed that the Pleasure Principle drives you to seek pleasure

and avoid pain during early life, notably, childhood and teenage. However, as you grow up you begin to learn and appreciate the need for sometimes enduring pain and to defer gratification of desire in view of the exigencies and obstacles of reality. An 'Ego' thus educated becomes, Freud averred, 'reasonable' so as not to let itself be governed by the 'Pleasure Principle'. Therefore, it obeys the 'Reality Principle' although underlying it is also the desire for seeking pleasure—in a way and at a stage that appear to be civilised and acceptable social behaviour. However, in this case, taking account of the prevalent reality, pleasure is postponed, even diminished. According to Sigmund Freud, human personality is complex and has more than a single component. In his famous psychoanalytic theory of personality, he avers that it is composed of three elements: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego [This component is further split into Ego-Ideal and Conscience]—work together to create complex, often bewildering, human behaviours. The Id says, "I want it just now." The Ego counsels, "Wait until the time is ripe." The Superego frowns, "No, never."

To my study and experience, it is the *Pleasure Principle* that perennially holds sway because Man is a pain-avoiding and pleasure-seeking social animal. The problem of Pleasure Principle



belongs to Aesthetics [Science of Beauty and its opposite Ugliness] that is one of the five major branches of Philosophy; the other four are Ethics [Science of Right and Wrong; Moral and Immoral], Metaphysics [Thinking things out to their ultimate significance such as in Religion and matters esoteric], Logic [Science of correct reasoning], and Politics [Science of ordering relationship between the State and Society].

Having dealt with Creativity in its theory, practice, research, and pedagogy all my life, I find that we humans are head over heels in the realm of Aesthetics—right from the moment we get up in the morning when we look at the face in the mirror which tendency lingers throughout the day compelling us to do everything within our powers to look beautiful, acceptable, and admirable if only to savour the illusion that we are in full control of the world by virtue of our ‘likeable personality’. The entire inventory of devices we use and the desires we harbour to sustain social acceptability point to the vainglory that is the most vulnerable aspect of our personality. What underlies this instinct [Thinking with the Body] in the human world of gregariousness is the ever-gnawing desire to seek pleasure, beginning with our physique. To be convinced about my analysis you only have to look at the ever-flourishing international market selling face creams and

other cosmetics. Example: Revenue of the cosmetic industry in the United State is 62.46 billion US dollars.

The point of making this daredevil digression is to show why the problem of minds entrapped in the evanescent pleasures of *Maya* is so nearly intractable. If your psychosomatic and socio-cultural nature is one of constant seeking after pleasure in the mortal world, Religion must provide an effective and pragmatic alternative to wean your Consciousness from Mind-orientation [*Manmukh*] towards Guru-orientation [*Gurmukh*] states of life during workaday existence. If the alternative is more pain than pleasure *Manmukhs* would be happy [or so they believe] to remain neck-deep in Worldliness, its pains and problems notwithstanding. A taste of the alternative “NAAM” [Spiritual Pleasure whose acme is BLISS] *Rasa* purported to be superior to “KAAM” [Bodily Pleasure] *Rasa* can be had from Meditation [*Dhyana*] that combines Name-Chanting [*Jap*] with God-Remembrance [*Simran*].

To my experience, *Dhyana* in the Sikh Faith that veers round to the contemplation of God without attributes [*Nirakaar*] is an arduous exercise but yields results which are truly spiritual in terms of joyous wonder [*Vismaad*] rather than merely psychological [heady thrills of evanescent pleasures relating to the five inner foes] as is the case with other forms of meditation. The TV

Gurus marketing their wares on the “Idiot Box” tell you to focus your thoughts on ‘breathing’, or a lighted lamp, or an idol, or a black dot on white background—which is pointless though they do yield their own benefits that are both temporary and illusory. To discriminate between the genuine and the spurious the test is quite simple. If after months or years of practice you are not able to exercise control over your Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride, take it from me that you are still the same old chronic victim as you were before having taken up courses or exercises in ‘meditation’ taught by the TV Gurus. The problem that is well nigh impossible is to locate and reach real Spiritual Preceptors because they never publicise their activities and achievements. The stated Five Inner Foes must turn into Five Outer Friends, respectively, as Lust become Love of Humanity and God; Anger transformed into Compassion and Mercy; Greed changed into Altruism and Socially-Beneficent Activities; Attachment wrought into Empathy and Camaraderie; and Pride subsumed in Humility and God-Fearing Outlook.

From the foregoing exposition, the question that arises is: *How to do the right Meditation?* Guru Arjan Dev counsels on the subject thus:

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਸੰਤ ਮੀਤ॥

ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਏਕਾਗਰ ਚੀਤ॥

O saints and friends, sing panegyrics to
God's glory thus

In red-alert attention with all your gathered
consciousness

[Ashtapadi 24, Pauri 5, Page 295]



*Purkh maih naari naari maih purkha
boojh-hu brahm gyani*

*Dhun maih dhyanu dhyan maih jaanya
gurmukhi akath kahaani*

*Mann maih joti joti maih manooa panch
milewi gur bhai*

*Nanak tin kai sad balihari jin ek
sabadi liv laayi*

Man in woman and woman in man is a secret,

O you, the wise, discern it

Shabda has sprung from *Brahma* fix your
consciousness in its melody

With mind thus attuned to divine sound the
flame within would be lit

Nanak is a sacrifice to them whose mind-
melody is in harmony

[Ramkali Mehta-1: Chowpade Number 9]





While divulging a profound medical secret, Guru Nanak is showing here the perfect way to the right meditation. Modern advances in medicine testify to what the Guru had averred more than 500 years ago. Man's sperm fertilising woman's ovum reproduces a new life that contains the biological characteristics of both parents, suggesting that the two sexes involved in the process are not opposed; they are complementary. Therefore, the conflict between genders is purely an artificial subterfuge, societal weaponry, invented by man to assert and maintain his supposed superiority over woman—largely by the power of brawn. The Guru stretches this analogy further to negotiate the divine within the realm of biology. He says that it is the Creator who has manifested Himself in various forms, including man and woman. By implication, it means that those who claim to possess esoteric knowledge ought to discern the secret that it is the ONE who shows up in illimitable varied and mesmerising forms from behind the MANY.

Moving on to the meditative aspect of his Revelation, the Guru says that because the Sacred Word [*Shabda*] is created from Brahma, it carries all the divine traits. In other words, the *Shabda*, in turn, becomes the vehicle to access the Realm of Truth in order to have a vision of the Master because, according to the Guru, Lord God dwells there. How? The seeker must gather

all his consciousness and implant it studiously in the soil of melody (*Dhun*) that *Shabda* creates when it is chanted, so much that eventually that very *Dhun* becomes so deeply transfixed in the seeker's psyche that it starts to sing and keeps singing without the aid of chanting by the tongue—ceaselessly, so that God may be known eventually. However, this indescribable story [*Akath Kahaani*], Guru Nanak asserts, can be heard and understood only by the seeker on whom the Guru casts his glance of grace.

Finally, those who attune their consciousness to the melody of the *Shabda*, the divine flame automatically becomes manifest within them. Thenceforth, their mind attains in it an imperturbable acquiescence, so much so that the Five Foes [Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride] are so tamed as to become the seeker's classmates—without any opposition or tension of conflicting interests whatsoever. Having recounted the enormous benefits that accrue from the exercise explained by him, Guru Nanak says that he is a sacrifice to those whose minds are transfixed thus in the Sacred Word—because that is the penultimate of what a mortal can ever hope to get in this world and the beyond.

Take the example of learning how to drive a car. Even when the driving teacher was sitting by your side your consciousness was collected and at peak attention by virtue of the fear of accident

that had been instilled in you by the new exercise. This task did not merely involve attention and alertness but also all your senses and skills that were struggling in unison to keep the vehicle under control. All the instructions given by the teacher meant little until you put them to trial in actual practice—right away. It took you several days to gain sufficient control for driving safely in many different situations including risky times. However, what you were not aware during the course of driving lessons and practice was the fact that beginning with your first seated posture in the car and throughout the duration of learning, it was your ‘Conscious Mind’ that was attentively receiving instructions by the teacher’s word of mouth to which you invariably listened, and memorised them for use in gaining easy coordination of various moves involving the steering wheel, clutch, accelerator, brakes—besides looking ahead, towards the sides, and in the rear-view mirror, and so forth. When I was learning car driving, I remember, I would come back home dead tired as if I had been engaged in a wrestling bout. Sometimes I felt that my *chappals* [slip-on footwear] were a big hindrance; at others, I thought I should have put on laced shoes; yet on others, I was bugged by the idea of trying to drive the vehicle bare foot.

If you apply the message in this brief exposition to the tackling of problem of *Dhyana*

you will realise that it is incredibly more complex and challenging than car driving. For one thing, in the case of car driving, things are material and well known such as could be held in hands and controlled. In Meditation, nothing is known—certainly nothing of God who you have made the centre of your *Dhyana*. However, the keenness of faculties, especially the sense of hearing has to be razor sharp and sustained, so that the instructions that you hear with your ears on chanting with your tongue also become the *Mantra* that you are going to use as a vehicle for driving your Consciousness uphill because it drops far more easily than it is raised with Herculean effort—and to keep it up there requires an exceptional strength and stamina which draws upon your psychosomatic, emotional, and spiritual resources.

Since ‘listening’ in the exercise is both crucial and indispensable, learning to listen with undivided attention a prerequisite. At this stage, you are using your ‘Conscious Mind’ to take instructions so that it studiously implants them in the ‘Unconscious Mind’ *via* the ‘Subconscious Mind’. Why? It is because unless the *Mantra* strikes root in the Unconscious Mind, state of Unconditioned Spontaneity [*Sahj*] cannot be reached. Having learnt car driving and practised long enough under different conditions handling the vehicle on the road alone and unaided does



not become automatic until it turns into an operation in which the Unconscious Mind does everything *right* without the knowledge, much less intervention, of the Consciousness Mind. In other words, unless the Conscious Mind, to begin with, is convinced about a thing that you want it to learn it does not take the trouble of owning and storing it in the Unconscious Mind for future automatic use in quick response to recall by reflexion.

At this juncture, it is important to point out other queer facts related to the problem of *Dhyana*. By its very nature, *Surt* [Soul-Consciousness] like water flows naturally *downwards*. Therefore, in terms of the location of the *Chakras*, Consciousness plummets to the sex centre whose biological function is limited to human reproduction but here the Pleasure Principle holds sway. Birth-control methods having been discovered and brought into common use divert the attention towards sexual pleasure. While sexual pleasure is most intense among the list of lower *Rasas* over-indulgence drains the highest quantum of psychosomatic energy but the victim does not give a damn. An experiment on a male rat was performed in which the nerve centres in the rodent's brain were artificially stimulated to cause orgasm. When you achieve orgasm, your brain releases a surge of dopamine. During orgasm, your brain is working overtime to

produce a slew of different hormones and neurochemicals. One of these is dopamine, a hormone that is responsible for feelings of pleasure, desire, and motivation. The rat soon got so much addicted to sexual pleasure that it looked forward to having orgasm again and again while refusing food. The result is anybody's guess. The rat died a martyr by starving itself to sexual pleasure! Gang rapes committed on baby girls are on the rise every day. The desire for sexual pleasure is so overwhelming that all that civilised is thrown to the winds in a flourish of nonchalance.

Kaam Rasa is a valid and acceptable pleasure. Only it ought to be kept within limits—and to do so no yogic power avails. The celebrated Ved Vyasa of Mahabharata fame was born out of wedlock because his father Prashar Rishi [Brahmin] could not control his urge and had sex with Satyavati, the fisher woman [Shudra]. Hailing from the caste-conscious Brahmin community notorious for their socially discriminating activities, Prashar forgot his high social stature and became a willing victim of *Kaam Rasa*. Sigmund Freud is right when he says that Libido cannot be sublimated. Guru Nanak saw through Brahmanical hypocrisy and hailed the Householder's Life in which Libido could find its natural outlet and other urges getting mollified by human bondage.

At this juncture, a word about Virtues and Vices should be in order. To my understanding, Virtues are feminine qualities naturally inclined towards Divinity. Vices, on the contrary, are masculine and, as can be expected, find their ultimate consummation in Devilry. Interestingly, nobody needs to be taught how to be vicious because he would become one naturally—anyway, anyhow, anywhere, anytime. On the other hand, the desirability of Virtues in human life has been so extolled that we find illimitable literature on the subject in tomes largely devoted to the promotion and exegesis of different religions. In other words, Virtues must be taught, nurtured, and developed to a point where their presence in human behaviour validates the need, nurture, development, and sustenance of Civilisation. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the cultivation of Virtues can be done only with an extraordinary effort of will keeping in view these qualities as being Divine endowments. Sikh Faith and other World Religions have without doubt striven to name innumerable Virtues and hail them as attributes of God in His *Sarguna Saroop* [Attributive Form]. Since this exercise is a lifelong psycho-spiritual workout that gets consummated only during workaday existence—here and now—it warrants careful planning, imparting instructions by example, and studious implementation from day to day encompassing

the proverbial triad of “Thoughts, Words, and Deeds” in perfect alignment and flawless unison.

In the light of this brief exposition, I have figured out that Life is, indeed, a Practical Art that must be learnt, developed, nurtured, expressed, and applied by actually *living* it to the full, *not* merely by reading about it in books or talking about it in seminars and discourses.

Guru Nanak has spelled out the queer problem in characteristic succinctness.

*Punni paapi aakhanu naahi
Kari kari karna likhi lai jaahu*

The virtuous and the vicious are
not mere words
Your actions determine their effect
on your psyche
And you carry them along as tendencies
and fruits
(To life beyond the present mortal boundary)
[Japuji Sahib; Pauri 20; Lines 7 and 8]

In view of the way that Guru Nanak has shown, the seeker must know that the cultivation of Virtues is a prerequisite to being a SIKH because you are religious only when Soul-Consciousness [*Surt*] is in touch with Divine Presence as embodied and revealed in the Sacred Word [*Shabda*].



ਜਪਹੁ ਤ ਏਕੇ ਨਾਮ॥
ਅਵਰਿ ਨਿਰਾਫਲ ਕਾਮ॥

Japahu ta eko naama
Avar niraafal kaama

Chant only the Holy Name if you must
All your other pursuits shall turn to dust



WHAT to chant? Nothing but Truth ought to be chanted.

HOW to chant it? Fifth Line of Fifth Pauri of Japuji Sahib shows the way.

Gaaveesai suneeai mani rakkhiai bhaao
Sing paeans to God's glory; listen to it with
rapt attention, and devoutly nurture love for
the divine.



It is noteworthy that the prescribed praxis is more than an uphill task. It involves three organs: the tongue [for singing], the ears [for listening], and the heart [for nurturing love], which must function in perfect unison to make it a pleasurable act of devotion—by analogy, psycho-spiritual intercourse of the Soul-Bride with the Divine-Bridegroom.

FREQUENCY of chanting the Holy Name has been prescribed by Guru Nanak in Pauri-32 of *Japuji Sahib* of which the first three lines are quoted here.

Ikdoo jeebhau lakh hohe lakh hovaih
lakh vees
Lakhu lakhu gerhas aakhiyaih eku naamu jagdees
Etu raahi pati pavarhian charhiye hoye ikees

If my tongue were to be not one or two, but
one lakh; twenty lakhs at that
Each one were to utter the Cosmic Master's
Holy Name one lakh times flat
His path would show up; then, climbing
Divine Groom's stairs I would become Him



I have elsewhere in this book calculated the time it would take the seeker-devotee to complete the prescribed count to raise soul-consciousness so incredibly high that the mind melts like wax to merge in Divine Essence.

WHEN to chant it? Fifth line of Fourth Pauri of Japuji Sahib has the prescription.

Amrit vela sachu naao vadiayee vechaaru

In the ambrosial hour meditate on the Holy Name and reflect on its many-splendoured divine majesty.



Amrit Vela [ambrosial hour], as a thumb rule, may be taken as the time at least two hours before sunrise. The choice of this time is crucial because when the world [*Maya*] sleeps the seeker must awaken to the soul's mute urges to re-establish live-wire connection with the Divine Husband. God as the Primal Person and Creator of the Cosmos and everything that it contains is beyond the influence of Time-Space Continuum. He neither sleeps nor is ever tired; He remains in His unchanged Formlessness—beyond change [*Sat*], Truth personified [*Satyam*], in undwindling consciousness [*Chit*], perennially young, of unageing beauty [*Sundaram*], fondly watching over His all creatures with undiminished compassion [*Shivam*]; above all, in the imperturbable acquiescence of Bliss [*Anand*].

As day dawns and the world awakens to get involved in its Mayavic business of Matter in blatant forgetfulness of the urges of Spirit the cacophony of mercantile machinations gets progressively louder until the decibels are so high as to make hearing sane voices impossible. As you may have noticed all talks and transactions during the hectic daily schedule veer round to subjects invariably centered in family, society,

politics, rat race, and cut-throat competition of which the singular sly aim is to achieve one-upmanship and anyhow grab profit at the loss of rivals and adversaries—regardless of whether they are real or perceived. Free from the daylong soul-killing pollution caused by the noise of loss and gain, *Amrit Vela* is blessed with relative calm and peace in which the subtle inner voice can be heard to convince the maverick mind to collect scattered soul-consciousness [*Surt*] into psychic attentiveness and divert it inwards for dialogue with the Sacred Word [*Shabda*]. The praxis is intended and aimed at bringing about *Surt-Shabda* conjoining. It does not come about easily because even the mightiest of emperors and temporal sovereigns fail far too miserably.

That is why Guru Nanak has declared as follows:

Asa Mehla-1

Aakhaan jeevaan visrai mar jaaon

Aakhan aukha saacha naaon

By chanting it I truly live; forgetting,

I spiritually die

Remembering the True Name presents
many a difficulty



This psycho-spiritual workout requires absolute purity of thoughts, words, and deeds; love for entire humanity, unflinching devotion to the psycho-spiritual task, among many other things.

According to the Guru, “*Vin gun keete bhagati n hoye*”; if while worshipping God I cannot acquire some of His virtues all my meditation, rituals, and ceremonial piety are an exercise in futility.

Guru Nanak reiterates this fundamental fact in another *Shabad* of which two lines are quoted below:

Asa Mehla-1

Mann eku n chetasi moorh mana

Hari bisrat tere gun galiya

O mind! My foolish mind: why you do not
remember the One Master

It is because of your forgetfulness of God that
your virtues now fester



This is one of the most crucial points that I would like to make absolutely clear here to obviate any error of judgement that we Indians are quick to pronounce because jumping to conclusions is our only national sport. Endless repetition as noted before in the chanting or

remembrance of God's Holy Name is not a pious ritual for flattering or pleasing Him. Just the same, as Science has shown experimentally that repetition ‘conditions’ the mind and, therefore, the behaviour that results in imbibing some of the Creator's countless virtues becomes its habit laying the ground for spiritual progress.

Dog experiments of the Russian scientist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov [1849-1936] played a critical role in the discovery of one of the most important concepts in psychology. While it was originally discovered quite by accident, these famous experiments led to the discovery of classical **CONDITIONING**. This discovery had a major impact on our understanding of how learning takes place as well as the development of the School of Behavioural Psychology. Working in many different disciplines I have developed an insatiable inquisitiveness using which I easily cross over from one area to the other and discern invisible linkages in humans' never-ending *Adventure of Ideas* discovered and developed in innumerable different fields of human endeavour. Based on my curious method I found a strange connection between ‘conditioning’ [Science] and ‘*rang mein rangna*’ [getting imbued in the colour of the adorable, lovable ‘Lover’ or ‘Beloved’] that is a primary metaphor used in *Gurbani* [Spirituality]. If you see Guru Nanak Dev's prescription in this light

you cannot but be convinced that Man *can* certainly become God by chanting/remembering His Name countless number of times i.e. repetition done *ad infinitum*!

It is a well-known and universally accepted fact that Science, by its very nature, scope, and method, which is OBJECTIVE to the core, far from indulging them, shuns VALUES [that are SUBJECTIVE] on which Humanity as the Essence of Man is raised, sustained, judged, and advanced. Since all material advancement worldwide is the achievement of Science [and Technology] and Science does not create Values; then, what is the source of their genesis and existence throughout the chequered course of human history? My answer is: RELIGION. Incidentally, whether Scientists like it or not, whether they are atheists, theists, or agnostics, their very names and whatever else they promote in the name of Humanity are VALUES developed and prescribed by RELIGION. I am giving two examples [following this lead you could discover innumerable instances to make sense of my quaint averment].

The name ‘STEPHEN’ [Hawking] means “Crown; Wreath”. In the Bible, Stephen was the first Christian martyr.

The name ‘ALBERT’ [Einstein] is of Old English origin, and its meaning is “Noble; Bright”.

Ironically, Stephen Hawking looked down upon [even dreaded] Religion as if it were Satan’s Empire. And Einstein, despite his honorific universal position, could not make bold to tell the Christians to stop burying their dead and adopt cremation instead because the latter is more ‘scientific’. If this practice continues in the next millennium I can assure you that there would be many more graves for the dead than homes for living humans!

In the quote that follows Guru Nanak has propounded the briefest and truest Theory of Economics. You may do to the hilt what you will but you can never gather wealth by fair and honest means. As so many economic offences regularly reported worldwide testify to the weird fact that the filthily rich have hoarded wealth by mass-scale exploitation of the meek and humble, the low and hapless; by tax evasion, by cheating, by swindling, by stealing, even by robbing. Otherwise, as my father used to tell me when I was a schoolboy, that with honestly earned livelihood from government service, he was barely able to support the family—and could not even dream of buying one of the two brands of bicycle [Raleigh and Hercules] that then cost twice his monthly salary. Then, as he was promoted in years and moved on to get more pay he was unable to buy a scooter—and much later the problem still persisted when it came to



the purchase of a car. If Guru Nanak truism was not right, how come, as it is reported, only about 90 persons in the world own wealth that is equal to the total wealth owned by half the world population i.e. 3.5 billion people! What creates the problem, in the first place, and sustains it like hell fire on globe? It is one of the Five Inner Foes: Greed. If this were not so it would have been damn easy to solve the global economic crisis.

*Isu jar kaaran ghani viguti ini jar ghani
khuaayi
Paapaan baajh-hu hovai naahi muyia
saathi na jaayi*

This wealth that is the cause of their ruining
and many have by it lost honour
Though it cannot be hoarded without sin it
deserts on death of the hoarder
For the sake of this wealth so many
have been ruined
Because of this wealth so many
have been shamed
Wealth was gathered only by those
who had sinned
On death it did not go with them who had by
it been tamed



As a member of Panjab University Senate, I once posed a question to which nobody had any answer despite the fact that the best of university dons were in attendance for the meeting. America has the largest number of Nobel Laureates in Economics in the world. But nobody so far has come up with a theory that could effectively control inflation. Why? It is because, to my understanding, the problem of inflation does not lie in the field of Economics. It belongs to the discipline of Ethics—the science that deals with questions of Right and Wrong; Moral and Immoral. Offering the policy of *laissez-faire*, Adam Smith, hailed as Father of Economics, argued that it is safe to leave the economy to be propelled, regulated and controlled by *invisible hand* i.e. the forces of competition motivated by *self-interest* be allowed to play their part in minimising the volume of savings for development. He recognised three factors of production, namely, labour, capital, and land but left out ‘Ethics’ under the illusion that ‘Morality’ is best left to the Laws of Nature. Alien to prescription of Religion, especially the crisp and timeless-universal pronouncements of Guru Nanak Dev, Smith conveniently forgot that Man is born with Five Foes [Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, and Pride] lodged deep within his being, and he ought to undergo a strict regimen of religious exhortations to rid himself of ‘Greed’

in the present case. Apart from its psycho-spiritual aspects I have called this workout the process of ‘Denaturisation’ running through which Man becomes *human* and *humane*.

Mirza Ghalib’s couplet says it all with unmatched succinctness:

*Bas kih dushwaar hai har kaam ka
aasaan hona
Aadmi ko bhi muyassar nahin insaan hona*

Each task is difficult, and not easy of
accomplishing
It is not given even to Man to become a
Human Being



The point involved is not only noteworthy but also warrants practical assimilation. But alas! It is beyond the gumption of worldly men who are neck-deep in the cell pool of Materialism and Consumerism. They are quick to shrug it off as irrelevant and nonsensical because their minds have been *conditioned* into utter abhorrence for matters religious. Thus the discomfiting irony of Technological Advancement at the cost Humanity stays put and we collectively have the roller-coaster ride for sheer thrills towards our certain annihilation as *Homo sapiens* species.

Leaving the matter at that in the vain hope that one day you will be impelled to reflect on what I have elucidated by my meditative study of Guru Nanak Bani, let me move on to the next important points.

What is the difference between **JAP** [Chanting] and **SIMRAN** [Remembering]?

The following third and fourth lines from the First Ashtapadi of *Sukhmani Sahib* give the answer.

ਸਿਮਰਉ ਜਾਸੁ ਬਿਸੁੰਭਰ ਏਕੈ॥
ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਅਗਨਤ ਅਨੇਕੈ॥

*Simrao jaasu bisumbhar ekai
Naam japat agnat anekai*

Remember-Adulate Master of the Universe
Myriads chant His Name in ways countless



As is clear in my English rendering of the Punjabi original, the point to note here is that Remembrance [*Simran*] ought to focus on adulation of the One and Only ONE Master, the Sole Sovereign of the Universe] but Chanting [*Jap*] may be done using any one of his countless Holy Names in myriad different ways. That is why Guru Nanak has categorically declared that



he is a sacrifice to all the Creator's innumerable Names. To my knowledge and experience, especially in the light of the Guru's cosmic view of life, all names of God such as Wah-i-Guru, Om, Oankar, Ram, Allah-hoo, et al are valid, and chanting them would produce the expected results. However, as the Guru has simplified *Jap* [Chant] must be done only of *Sach* [Truth]; therefore, the First Sloku of *Japuji Sahib* is the Best Choice: *Adi Sach, Jugadi Sach, Hai Bhee Sach; Nanak, Ho See Bhee Sach*, underscoring as it does the unprecedented view of Time uniquely recorded by Guru Nanak to make a four-segment duration without beginning, without end; unlike the globally accepted three-segment chronometric stretch with its typical Past, Present, and Future. My contention is that once soul-healthy 'conditioning' by illimitable repetition of the Holy Word [NAAM] starts striking root in the seeker's psyche, he would automatically be convinced beyond any shadow of doubt by the inner logic of the Soul that to access and eventually enter the Realm of Truth [*Sach Khand*] he would have to go beyond Time—the familiar stretch of duration in which things happen in the midst of unceasing clamour for attention that no one gives because everyone craves it.

At this juncture, it is crucial to reiterate the sacred contents of the *Mool Mantra* and the *Slok*

[*Jap*] that follows it. To all intents and purposes, for the initiated seeker [Sikh], the Numeral One [*Ik*] with which Nanak Bani [and *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* begins] is self-sufficient and autocratic encompassing as it does all the attributes of God described by the Guru, and offers complete one-point focus for *Simran* [meditative remembrance of God]. However, to begin with, the seeker's maverick mind conditioned [in fact, corrupted] by countless worldly concerns and cares caused by its innumerable merchandise and commodities remains unconvinced without the availability of certain tags on which he could hang his consciousness. Therefore, the Numeral One is immediately followed by *Oankar* as the umbrella-title for the sole One God who performs the triple functions of Creation, Protection, and Destruction all by Himself. Thereafter, His primary attribute that testifies to His Existence as *REAL*, *not* mythical, is stated to be Truth. This too would sound far too abstract to comprehend by a mind accustomed to experiencing the World of Objects by the Five Senses. Thus the Guru hastens to add: Let us *Name* the Quintessential among God's countless attributes, traits, qualities, features, distinctions, and hallmarks—and he sets out the list thus: Primal Creator-Person, fearless, without enmity, imperishable being, transcending biological birth; and, hereafter, the closing phrase is crucial because its most popular common

interpretation “Attainable by Guru’s Grace” does not appeal to me. My reason is simple. The Guru setting out God’s most distinguished traits was in no hurry to tell the Sikhs how He could be attained [which cannot happen by any means known to man *except* by His grace]. It is clear from his Bani that he has declared God to be his Guru [and no human person], and the *Mool Mantra* is the briefest yet fullest text of his Revelation to which he testifies in these two words thus: *I have made this proclamation by (my) Guru’s [i.e. God’s] Grace [Gurprasadi]*.

We must appreciate that in his divine declaration is contained the seed of Humility that Guru Nanak eventually made the cardinal principle of the Sikh Faith. Nowhere in his 974 *Shabads* [Hymns] has he even remotely suggested that he is taking credit for any of his divine pronouncements. And the first indication that he is now actually setting forth the praxis and method of God-realisation shows up in the word “*Sachiar*” of the First Pauri of *Jap*; beginning which he starts using his name “NANAK” to put his stamp on divine utterances that dawn on him in his Revelation ever so frequently. Moving on thenceforth, we encounter the title “*Jap*” that is followed by the first *Slok* “*Adi Sach, Jugadi Sach, Hai Bhee Sach; Nanak, Ho See Bhee Sach*”—which comes off as Prologue to his Bani. Since the name ‘Nanak’ appears for the first time here

at this juncture, in my view, it authenticates the proclamation made in the *Mool Mantra* besides obliquely defining “NAAM” which, elsewhere in the Bani, is not spelled out despite its repetition *ad infinitum* whereby the Guru sets forth the illimitable powers of God as Creator, Protector, and Destroyer in many different ways and diverse situations, and what and how he does with them.

This brief exposition leads me to emphasise that the *Slok* prescribes the Chant [*Jap*] underscoring the fact that He whose Attributes have been set forth in the *Mool Mantra* under [or, after] “NAAM” alone is to be worshipped. Accordingly, when you chant “*Adi Sach, Jugadi Sach, Hai Bhee Sach; Nanak, Ho See Bhee Sach*” you are addressing God, albeit in His contemplative Omnipresence, in terms of His Attributes stated by Guru Nanak, engaging your maverick mind in complete meditation that embodies an indispensable purificatory process. As psycho-spiritual detergent it requires the active devotional application of NAAM, DAAN, and ISNAAN in the seeker’s daily religious regimen to be strictly adhered as lifelong divine assignment by accepting Death as the Eternal Truth and giving up hope of Life as the mirage of shifting sands on the Sahara of Time. In this light, I feel that *Mool Mantra* should be chanted/recited starting from Numeral One [IK] to



Nanak, Ho See Bhee Sach in order to be complete and wholesome. Let me make it clear that, in suggesting this unconventional approach to the understanding and practice of *Gurbani*, I am not trying to raise any controversy; only sharing what I have found to be my lifetime achievement award as fruit of my unremitting seeking since my younger days. And I celebrate this priceless gift daily in joyous wonder and ever-deepening gratitude to Guru Nanak for his over-brimming grace in guiding my journey as my divine path-finder.

Five *Banis*: Guru Gobind Singh, Last and Tenth Master of the Sikh Faith, created *The Khalsa* [Commonwealth of Pure Souls called Saint-Soldiers] on Baisakhi Day of 1699 CE. In response to Guru Gobind Singh's unusual and unnerving clarion call to the congregation: "I want one head", five volunteers valiantly stood up one after the other and offered their heads. The Guru baptised them by administering *Amrit* [Ambrosia] and admitted them to the Order of Khalsa. *Amrit* used in the initiation ceremony was prepared with the stirring of water from River Sutlej in an iron bowl with a double-edged sword [*Khanda*]. Mata Jeetoji and Mata Sahib Devan are remembered as vital protagonists in the rite of *Amrit* initiation [*Pahul*]. Mata Jeetoji added sugar puffs [*Pataashas*] to the divine drink during preparation that was done to the recitation of Five *Banis*. These Five Scriptures are: *Japuji Sahib*,

Jaap Sahib, *Tav Parsad Sawaiyye*, *Chaupai*, and *Anand Sahib*, which transformed the river water into the Elixir of Eternity. The five volunteers sipped *Amrit* personally administered by Guru Gobind Singh who hailed them as *Panj Pyare* [Five Beloveds]. The Guru renamed them by suffixing 'Singh' [Lion] to their sobriquets. Since the day of the epoch-making initiation ceremony, unprecedented in the annals of world history, the baptised 'Sikhs' turned 'Singhs' are exhorted to recite these Five *Banis* daily following an inviolable regimen.

All the Five *Banis* extol God's countless virtues and sing paeans to His glory and divine majesty. No wonder, therefore, that those very Indians who had become emaciated, timid, and spineless during unremitting suppression by invaders-rulers rose from slaves to become sovereigns as Saint-Soldiers who eventually succeeded in extirpating the centuries-old supremacy of the Mughal Empire. When those initiated into the Order of Khalsa sip the drink, they renounce their past with all its caste, class, and professional restrictions and claim their new identity with Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Sahib Devan as their two equally important spiritual parents. Mata Sahib Devan was Guru Gobind Singh's third wife. Tradition has it that their marriage was not consummated. Even though she was not their biological mother, as a matter of convention, Mata Sahib Devan became the Khalsa's Spiritual Mother.

Spiritual significance of Numeral ‘5’ and the Five Banis, especially the sequence in which they are prescribed to read/recited by the devout has been explained beautifully by Giani Sant Singh Maskeen. There are Five Senses: Visual, Audial, Olfactory, Tactile, and Gustatory with corresponding Sense Organs, respectively: Eyes, Ears, Nose, Skin, and Tongue. The Last and Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh has prescribed Five Banis, namely, *Japuji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib*, *Tav Parsad Sawaiyye*, *Chaupai*, and *Anand Sahib*; Five K’s: *Kes* [Unshorn Hair], *Kangha* [Comb], *Kachhehra* [Specially designed shorts], *Karha* [Iron Bracelet], and *Kirpan* [Sword for Self-Defence; especially for protection of the meek and humble against injustice and atrocities: that is why it is called ‘*Kirpa-n*’ (*not Talwar*) which means it has God’s blessing (*Kirpa*)]. The Five Banis have a sequence determined by Divine Grace corresponding to the ascent of *Surt* [Soul-Consciousness] conjoined with *Shabda* [The Sacred Word] from the foundation to the Realm of Truth where it is all *Anand* [Bliss].

Jap is the beginning and foundation of Truth and a prerequisite of *Sachiar* [The Truthful]; it is chanting of the Holy Name with the tongue countless times. This illimitable psycho-spiritual workout moves up to the next level *Jaap* which is unuttered but yet an active part of breathing [inhalation and exhalation]. Once entrenched in the psyche *Jaap* implants Humility that becomes

an unending obeisance to *Wah-i-Guru*. Renunciatory disinterestedness [*Vairag*] in the maverick machinations of the World of Matter then automatically sets in thereby turning a *Manmukh* [Self-Willed] into a *Gurmukh* [Guru-Oriented] sustained by *Tav Parsad Sawaiyye*. It is a curious state of psychosomatic levitation that compels the devout into the prayer mode for further direction and upliftment—a state of mind in which *Chaupai* comes to the rescue of the seeker. This supplication is no routine affair. It is an SOS erupted from deep within a PART pining to be WHOLE. When his prayer is heard and granted, the seeker accesses the Realm of Bliss [*Anand Sahib*] where God dwells. It is noteworthy that *Anand Sahib* is one *Bani* that is recited and sung on all occasions either in part or full—as a constant reminder to the seeker that his soul’s ultimate destination is the attainment of BLISS.

From the worldwide crisis that betokens an impending catastrophe, anyone among the seven-billion-plus peoples inhabiting the Planet Earth would be quick to blame it on education as being Matter-focused instead of Mind-harnessed enterprise which we humans as the crowning glory of creation are expected to engage, if for no better reason than to show the way in which we are superior to, and on the higher rung of the Evolutionary Ladder than, the



Animals—among whom we identify our ancestors. While the issue may be debatable *ad nauseum* the very word E-D-U-C-A-T-I-O-N yields unsavoury, hard-to-digest meanings: Extirpation of Divinity by Universal Corruption of Attitude [aptitude, altitude, aspirations, and activities] in tandem with Travesty of the Inner [Mind] and Outer [Matter] Natures.

The problem springs from the fact that the more technologically advanced we get the greater is our tendency to forsake our greatest gift: the ability to think for ourselves. The corrective lies in the selfsame word E-D-U-C-A-T-I-O-N: Enlightenment by Downright Universalisation of Creativity as an Associate of Truth [which is the primary attribute of God] to deepen our insight and to sharpen our Observation to alter our Nature [notions, norms, and nostrums]. Education must become perpetual learning rather than remain school-, college-, and university-bound coursework with inflexible syllabi. As psychosomatic activity, it must widen its scope to embrace *spirituality* so that Education moves from pill-form [specialisation and super-specialisation] imparting of formal instruction to the round-the-clock investigation, development, and application of Holistic Humanism.

As God's Messenger, Guru Nanak accomplished this onerous, uphill task with airy ease characteristic of what he called *SAHJ* [Unconditioned Spontaneity—in stoic indifference to the stress and

strain of profit and loss]. He thus extended the scope of Education by an inner law of divine dispensation to what it ought to do to achieve general weal of the entire humankind [*Sarbat da Bhala*]. By this token, Education would mean little if it did not naturally provoke Reflection, and thence move on to engage the beneficiary in Socially-Beneficent Action. If Education fails to achieve this laudable aim, it ends up as being a means to attain literacy—limited skill of reading and writing far removed from formally harnessed ability to use your mind and think for yourself.

Asa Mehla-1 Chowpade; SGGS, Page 356

ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥ ਜਾਂ ਪੰਚ ਰਾਸੀ ਤਾਂ
ਤੀਰਥ ਵਾਸੀ ॥੧॥

Vidya veechaari taan parupkaari
Jaan panchraasi taan teerath waasi

Education has little worth sans follow-up
reflection

And reflection must lead to socially-
beneficent action

He is a fit person and on pilgrimage truly goes
The one who has captured the five (inner) foes



Guru Nanak's genius had the psycho-spiritual resilience to perform multifarious functions simultaneously. He could instantly identify a problem, define it, and solve it to everyone's best advantage; above all, relate the solution to everyday experience thereby fulfilling the needs that we encounter during workaday existence. He was emphatic in his exhortations that any acquisition by the privileged members of a society that did not serve the purpose of uplifting the meek and helpless only aggravated and sharpened their egotism. There are countless examples of this epidemic malaise worldwide that people moving out of the portals of schools, colleges, and universities are high-browed hypocrites whose notion of being "educated" is to outsmart other people, especially the underdog, by manipulation, manoeuvring, machinations, intrigues, swindling, cheating, thievery, robbery, and a host of other tricks which have become a besetting sin of the so-called "civilised", technologically advanced, members of the *Homo sapiens*' species. Their formally-acquired 'knowledge' at enormous societal expenditure is actually conceit and snobbery that keeps Humanity as the Essence of Man at arm's length! Ironically, even Yogis who are touted to have gained self-control over baser human instincts indulge in malpractices to stay as overlords of the innocent, exploitable teeming millions without any compunction of conscience.

Sloka Sehskriti Mehla-1, Number 3

*Jog sabdam gyan sabdam bed sabdam
ta brahmanih*

*Khatri sabdam soor sabdam prakritih
Sarab sabdam tae k sabad ko jaanasi bheio
Nanak ta ko daasu hai soyi niranjan deio*

Jogis' way is knowledge; Brahmins', reading
the Vedas and teaching

Khatri's way is fighting as heroes; Shudras
live for the higher castes' serving

However, if one knew the secret, there is
only one way integrating all others

Such a blessed soul, Nanak, is unique as in him
God has His lodging




MAHALA, MEHLA, AND MAHALLA

Under the subject "Glossary of Religious Terms M to R", MAHALA is used in the Guru Granth Sahib to indicate the author of a composition by the Gurus. Each Guru used the name Nanak, for example, Mahala 5 is Guru Arjan, and Mahala 3 is Guru Amardas. [<https://www.sikhs.org/gloss3.htm>]

The same word is defined and explained in another entry [<https://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/home/arts-and-heritage/musicology-and-musicians/mahala>] as follows:





“**MAHALA**, traditionally pronounced mahalla, appears in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, as a special term to credit the authorship of the compositions of the Gurus recorded in it. Mahala here refers to the person of the Guru specified by a numeral following it which signifies his position in the order of succession, commencing with Guru Nanak as Mahala 1 (pahila or first). Mahala is a modified form of mahal, a word of Arabic/Persian origin. Mahal has also been used in the text of some hymns in its usual literal meaning as palace, grand building, house, dwelling, abode, and in its figurative connotations as human body, heart, mind or the mystic, mental state. It also appears with the same spelling mahala but signifying the Sanskrit mahila (lit. a woman, female).

“But the use of Mahala as a denominator of the Gurus is peculiar to Guru Granth Sahib. Mahala in this sense is derived from the Arabic word halul which means “descending, alighting, remaining; entering, penetrating; transmigration.” The Sikh belief is that the spirit or light of Guru Nanak informed the bodies of the successive Gurus, and that all of them were in essence the same Nanak. Mobid Zulfiqar Ardastani, who had personally known Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) and Guru Har Rai (1630-61), testifies in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* that Guru Nanak was referred to as Mahal I, his successor Guru Angad as Mahal II, and so on.

“He uses the very word halul for the transference of Guru Nanak’s spirit to the body of Guru Angad. All the Gurus whose bani is included in the Guru Granth Sahib used Nanak as their nom de plume. Mahala I, Mahala II, and so on (pronounced Mahalla Pahila-First, Mahalla Duja-Second, and so on) were used by Guru Arjan, the compiler of the scripture, to mark the authorship of the compositions. Mahala I at the beginning of a composition means that it is by the First Guru, Guru Nanak; Mahala II that it is by Guru Angad, his successor; Mahala III that it is by Guru Amar Das, Nanak III, and so on. That the practice dated back at least to the time of Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) is evidenced by two old manuscripts known as *Goindval Pothis*, which also have the Gurus mentioned in this style.”

MY COMMENT AND ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION

Wikipedia information is often not authentic and leaves the surfer in doubt as to its accuracy and dependability. For example, the correct spelling in transliteration of ‘halul’ is *Hulal* which is plural of *Hulla*, Arabic word for heavenly attire or dress. It is a synonym of the Arabic word *Jubba*’ which means gown.

Another example is the name of Mobid Zulfiqar Ardastani, in which case, the correct

spelling of Mobid [Persian word] is “Moobad” [alternative pronunciation “Moobid”] which means “Leader of Fire Worshippers”.

To my study and understanding, the word ‘Mahala’ in Punjabi written in the Gurmukhi script is spelled in three different ways: *Mahala*, *Mehla*, and *Mahalla*. Closely resembling this word is ‘Mahall’ also of Arabic origin which means storey, palace; stately, majestic or large and elegant house; imposing mansion. According to Punjabi-English Dictionary published by Punjabi University (1994), *Mahala* is a term followed by numeral indicating Guru-authors of hymns in Guru Granth Sahib. *Mehla* is a Sanskrit word for woman, lady, or female. *Mahalla* is ward, urban district.

For our deliberation on the subject, it is not unreasonable to assume that use of this word was necessitated when Guru Arjan Dev compiled the *Adi Granth* in which distinguishing one Guru-author from the other when they were all using the same pen-name ‘Nanak’ was unavoidable. By that time, Guru Amar Das’s divine utterance noted below in which he had clearly propounded God as the Divine Husband was available:

*Is(u) jag maih purkh(u) eik(u) hai saglee
naar(i) sabaayi*

[SGGS, Page 591]

God is the one Lord Husband in this world
All other living beings are His soul-brides

In this light, to accept that ‘Mahala’ is merely a term to indicate Guru-authors is truly hard. Also, the word *Mahalla* denoting ward, urban district, does not fit into the scheme of things. Therefore, it seems plausible that the word closest to the Fifth Master’s intended usage in the sense of Soul-Bride of the Divine Husband is *Mehla*. That the practice, as noted before, dated back at least to the time of Guru Amar Das (1479-1574 CE) is evidenced by two old manuscripts known as Goindval *Pothis* [Manuscripts], which also have the Gurus mentioned in this style, is enough corroborative evidence to the stated connotation because the Third Master himself has pronounced the verdict thus: *Is(u) jag maih purkh(u) eik(u) hai saglee naar(i) sabaayi*.

The reader might wonder why I have so painstakingly dilated upon a point that needs no proof because it had been accepted and is in practice without ever having been questioned. My explanation is forthright, even though it sounds simplistic, that to accept the position revealed by me is to hit the bull’s-eye. When the successor Gurus had willingly taken the *nom de plume* ‘Nanak’ for their own divine utterances in deference for the virtue of ‘Humility’ that Guru Nanak had made the cardinal principle of the Sikh Faith its acceptance by the Gurus as the Divine-Revealed Law becomes the core principle



of the world's youngest and most dynamic religion. Secondly, the Gurus' acceptance of being the Soul-Brides of the Divine Husband makes the Sikh Faith aglow with Pragmatic Spirituality—and, therefore, the common legacy of all peoples inhabiting the globe because anything that shines in utter darkness attracts attention as the path-finding light.

The point made by me is reinforced by Guru Nanak's *Shabad* in which he extols the unique virtues of WOMAN and revealing one of them stresses that "From Woman is born Woman". This is a perfect metaphor for what I am trying hard to drive home. It suggests that the Spirit of Woman's Virtues are transferred from one body to the other, and thence to another, *ad infinitum*. That is precisely the belief nurtured and nursed through the centuries by millions of Sikhs across the globe that all the Gurus are, indeed,

"NANAK" because his spirit was passed on to his nine successors one by one on their accession to his Spiritual Ministry.

All this argument boils down to this: To accept oneself as the soul-bride of the Divine Husband as all Gurus did without demur is to set foot on the Path of Righteousness without which Journey to the Realm of Truth [*Sach Khand*] can never commence, do what you will—because 'Humility' is the quintessential psycho-spiritual preparedness to receive the ambrosia of Divine Grace in the cup of one's heart. Humility, in penultimate analysis, implies that the receptacle is clean [*Sucha*] and empty [totally free from worldly ambitions and attachments] and, therefore, become an exclusive restless longing of the soul-bride for consummation of spiritual marriage with the Divine Husband 🌿





10



GLOSSARY OF SOME MYSTIC TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN *GURBANI*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Let me begin by sounding a caution. Many people, both the learned and the lay, tend to confuse New Ideas with Old Ideas because Guru Nanak and his Nine Successors recorded their experiences in *Gurbani* by using the prevalent terminology of their times that was a mix of concepts drawn from Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, etc. In this connection, it is imperative to appreciate that New Ideas, especially those pertaining to Religion, are meant for the collective welfare of the people whose minds are awfully conditioned by old notions of Divine Reality. Therefore, any mode of communicating their viewpoints could never be grasped if the Protagonists of New Ideas invented

an altogether new terminology and suddenly introduced it in their discourses. On the other side, since the leaders of different religions have talked about the same Ultimate Reality called by a plethora of different names in different communities and cultures at different times across the globe, it stands to reason to say that allusions to or likenesses with the existing glossary of terms is a natural phenomenon. However, this incidental, even unavoidable, pitfall must not be ignored in favour of what is *fresh* [and seeks to remedy the ills with which societies unavoidably get afflicted in the course of history] by stressing the *superficial* likenesses which such terms invariably carry. For example, the word, 'Ram' has been used in *Gurbani* umpteen numbers of times, but it does not refer



by any stretch of imagination to the Hindu deity “Ramchandra, the King of Ayodhya”. Even in the *Ramayana*, it is used as an adjective, *not* a proper noun, as many other words in the world-famous epic. The *Gurus* have used name ‘Ram’ for Lord God without ambiguity to underscore His divine trait of being Omnipresent in His creation as its indwelling spirit.

The Glossary of some Mystic Terms presented here is intended to tell the readers the specific connotation of each term in which it has been used in *Gurbani* time and again. However, the encouraging aspect of this usage for *Sanatana Dharma* is that the Sikh Gurus have testified to the actual existence of whatever is contained in the Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras, Puranas, and the two world-famous magnificent epics: the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They are *real*, not *mythology*—something modern-day Hindus are unnecessarily trying very hard to prove to have had historical existence.

Since I have used the term ‘Mysticism’ in this work, a word about it should be in order. Mysticism, called the “Religion of the Élite”, is based on union or communion with a deity or divine being. It is direct perception of Godhead transcending the physical limits of sensory experience. Mysticism is the experience of mystical union or direct communion with Ultimate Reality reported by Mystics. It is also

the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, or ultimate reality, can be attained through subjective experience (such as intuition or insight). A Mystic is a person who practises Mysticism and claims to possess insight into the mysteries of the universe by direct communion with the divine or immediate intuition in a state of spiritual ecstasy. The phrase “Religion of the Élite” implies that the patent approach that this discipline involves and deploys in the understanding of the creation is esoteric in nature, content, and scope, so much so that its practitioners themselves have confessed that they are unable to communicate the spiritual ecstasy which it provides them. To say that they have used the metaphors which stand widely accepted among scholars of Comparative Religion: *the peculiar case of the dumb that has eaten jaggery but cannot tell others how it tastes*—is to give up the search even before embarking upon the right path that leads to the right destination. Therefore, I have found my way out of the impasse that I am presently sharing with you.

Having worked in as many as 55 disciplines/subjects since 1960, I cannot at all subscribe to the stated view of Mysticism as unusually private experience resulting in joyous wonder but incommunicable although I am not a ‘mystic’ by any chance or definition. My argument is that if mystical experience cannot be communicated by

mystics, it is as good as not being there in the first place. That is what had led me to introduce ‘Creativity’ into the realm of ‘Mysticism’—and I coined the phrase “Creative Mysticism” in my study of Guru Nanak’s *Bani* for my second PhD earned in 2000. The source of the coinage was my having studied and shown as indispensable a working knowledge of four major fields of human endeavour: the Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology. I went on to distil the idea down to its fundamentals, and highlighted that the Humanities THINK; Art EXPRESSES, Science EXPLORES, and Technology INVENTS. Obviously, the extension of this credo into learning at first hand the Theory, Practice, Research, and Pedagogy of these disciplines equipped me with two tools: (i) To invariably take a holistic view of the world by using humans’ divine endowment of unique genius to create as well as to be in active partnership with God for the furtherance of His goal in the universe, and (ii) To see the March of Civilisation as the unfolding of Evolution that transcends the Darwinian finding to conjoin Science with Spirituality so that I am empowered to discern the interdependences [including their active, proactive, interactive, and reactive processes] among the stated fields of human endeavour, and their mutual enrichment for fulfilling the inmost urges of Human Life in every respect.

As I went along on the stated lines, I discovered that what we call the ‘scope’ of a given discipline is the limit that we ourselves impose on the **Adventure of Ideas** lying within its domain which, by their very nature, belong to other disciplines too—being as they are children of the same mother: Mind. Looked at the problem in this way, I could see Time—both as a linear duration and a cyclical process [which I resolved into a ‘Helix’; incidentally, the DNA has a helical structure]—as an organic **Whole** that we intellectually split into convenient segments we have named Past, Present, and Future. This showed to me that neither Tradition is Old nor Modernity is New because there is a creative continuity since the beginnings of Time which makes Tradition a continuous development of a body of whatever we humans do [e.g. literature, music, science, etc] and its own dynamics that drops dead wood to lunge ahead because the creative impulses inside you would not let you rest anyway. Thanks to the enormous contribution of the American Neurosurgeon Nobel Laureate Roger Sperry who could experimentally establish that the two hemispheres of the human brain perform different cerebral functions but coordinate them fast enough without the subject [Man] being aware of it.

Mystics have pointed out in a number of languages that all the words in all the holy books



cannot give salvation. What is required is one Word, the mystic Word [NAAM or *Gur-Mantra*] which takes the soul to God. It is this one Word that becomes an effective instrument of *Simran* [Remembrance] that is its mental repetition to bring the mind into concentration upon the Divine. I have used the term ‘Mystics’ owing to its neutral nature from communal overtones because Spiritual Realities have been revealed to persons regardless of their caste, creed, colour, community, race, praxis, modes of worship, age, gender, political affiliations, social status, and ethnic eccentricities in all parts of the world throughout the course of recorded history. However, I would also like to briefly discuss the more familiar terms such as Saint, Sadhu, Jigyasu, and Sansaari.

A *Sansaari* is one who is neck-deep into the experience of the World of Matter and shrugs off—as mindless waste of time, energy, and resources—any talk, much less the desire to know, about the ‘Spiritual’ aspect of Man’s longing for communion with God. He associates life, its genesis, purpose, and end with the death of the physical body, and would not be bothered to strain his nerves to imagine what happens after the soul jettisons the mortal frame [*Kapda* (vesture/vestment) in *Gurbani*].

For the other three terms, I would like to invoke what Gyani Sant Singh Maskeen has to

say in the matter. According to his hypothesis, in a congregation seated in a Place of Worship there would be only one *Jigyasu* among a crowd of one thousand. A *Jigyasu* is the one in whom curiosity to know about life beneath and beyond its enticing appearances is genuine and abiding. He is on the lookout for launching his lifelong spiritual quest as an earnest seeker.

By the same token, a *Sadhu* is a person who is one among a gathering of one thousand *Jigyasus*. He is lucky to have been initiated into the mainstream of seekers who are slowly and steadily jettisoning their impermanent relationships with other mortals without abdicating their duties to their families, communities, the state, nation, and the world. They are seriously engaged in psycho-spiritual workouts on the initiation and guidance of someone who has genuinely acquired some proficiency in Religion whose knowledge, much less practice and probity, can never be acquired *via* school, college, and university education that is supposed to be ‘secular’ [and, by implication, universal because it has snapped its ties with all forms of Religion which is commonly respected as ‘organised belief, and followed without questioning because queries are regarded as sacrilegious]. The *Sadhu* ‘knows’ his destination and is, therefore, determined to reach it through unremitting hard work called ‘*Sadhna*’ [Spiritual Endeavour].

A Saint is a *Sadhu* who has finally arrived after long years, even many lives, of continual struggle without losing faith in his life's mission or getting frustrated at frequent failures, including the lesser mortals' soul-gnawing sarcasm and societal ostracism. He has the rare and additional advantage of an accomplished Guru's guidance besides God's glance of grace that awakens his mind to complete openness so that his attitude, understanding, view, and personal life take on a universal-timeless status that make love, politeness, and humility his unfailing tools of communication with all peoples of the world. According to Guru Nanak, a Saint has acquired '*Sahj*' in his thoughts, words, and deeds—and his life is a willing and total surrender to the Will [*Raza*] and Edict-Fiat [*Hukam/hukm*] of Lord God. As may be expected, a Saint is one among one thousand *Sadhus*. By this calculation, there may be only Seven Saints among the world population of over seven billions. But, unfortunately, they remain unknown for two reasons: (i) They as fulfilled beings, self-sufficient in all respects, do not stand in need of marketing their wares [TV Gurus are no Saints at all because they end up building real estate empires and wallow in carnal luxuries obtained by black money], and (ii) Science or any other discipline has not so far developed/invented a sure-shot device to tell a saint from a scoundrel!

Let me tell you something of awesome significance by alluding to supercomputers. A supercomputer is about the processing speed which is measured in 'floating point operations per second' called 'FLOPS'—i.e., the number of calculations a supercomputer can do in a second. For example, ISRO's SAGA-220 logs in at 220 teraflops i.e., 10 raised to the power of 12 zeros. There are computers progressing into petaflops (15 zeros), and the future is looking up to zetaflops (21) zeros). To put it in perspective, the speed of a normal PC is 1 kiloflop (3 zeros). On the same lines, supercomputers need enormous speeds to process and transfer data within its various parts. Most PC users avail Internet speeds of less than 1 mbps. Banks and Telecom Companies use 4 gbps lines to maintain, for example, ATM networks or billing systems. Supercomputers need speeds of 20 gbps.

I look at supercomputers not as incredible wonders of technology, but as the elixir of Science drinking which sharpens my wits into heightened awareness of what human genius as God's endowment could do to aid our collective appreciation and understanding of what lies hidden in the deeper layers of the Divine Sport that shall open out to the inner eye only by the *Guru's* grace. Here I give you an example to demonstrate how the conventional figure of 'three scores and ten' [70 years] for man's age, far from being too short for acquiring complete



knowledge, is, in fact, an Eternity. Let us take the case of a supercomputer that has 12 tetrafflops a speed of 10,000,000,000,000 [Ten Trillion] per second. Assuming that you can count 500 numbers in a minute it will take you 20 billion minutes to count the whole lot, which work out to over 38,000 years i.e. eight times the period of recorded history. Isn't that a hell of a lot of events [calculation] that you cannot even imagine but have happened already in a single second? The point that emerges is that it is not the terrestrial duration of time that you associate yourself with your age but what and how much you could compactly pack of it in the given space of time [*Gurbani* says: God creates and destroys in the twinkling of an eye/His farthest limits are beyond measure!]. Therefore, the mortal age of 70 years or more is of no consequence. What you need is a supercomputer to work out your plans at incredible speeds to see your goals fulfilled. However, what you require is not the supercomputer that is a technological device. You stand in need of your Mind discovering that supercomputer's power which lies hidden within the cranium cavity. This awesome power cannot be accessed and laid bare with Technology. It warrants the luminosity of Truth, the Primary Attribute of Lord God, which can be had only with the intervention of the *Shabda-Guru*—a ray of the Sun [the Creator] that dispels the

darkness of countless previous lives in a fitful flash of realisation [making 'gods' of ordinary 'men' in a fleeting instant by what I call 'Spiritual Mutation']. According to one May-2016 scientific report it is estimated that one trillion species are currently on Planet Earth, with only one-thousandth of one percent described.

There is another aspect of Space and Time. Space is Female—as a vacuity; it receives in order to produce and give. Time is Male—a lance-like laser that pushes ahead to fertilise for production and change. SPACE is the Mother of Matter which is potential but is inert. TIME is the Father of Energy which is restlessly active—so much so that even in apparent solidity it generates and sustains constant vibrations. When the two conjoin in cosmic coitus there is endless creation, sustenance, and destruction. Therefore, every cell [organic or *living* Matter] and particle [inorganic or *inanimate* Matter] constantly experiences a-sexual pleasure of cosmic copulation. What we see and call major noticeable changes in the world are orgasms of Space-Time A-Sexual Union. Time's fascination for 'change' is so overpowering that it often creates its own Space. Imagine the Space where you are just now sitting by mentally going back in Time one century. You would be amazed to encounter either the placid timelessness of a rural habitat or the noisy assertion of urban

environment. The experience might help you recount, as it does in my case, the good old saying:

*God made the country
Man made the town*

The point I am trying to drive home is that Man as a product of Time unconsciously becomes the agent of change that it unremittingly brings about. The excitement of being able to change the Natural Environment into Human Environment is so heady that Man misled by *greed* often overshoots his ability to alter what he encounters in his surroundings in a radical way. To understand the curious content of this phenomenon and the constancy with which it undergoes change, Man alone—as an individual human person—could succeed, provided he looks within for *The Source*. Science, Technology, Engineering, or any other field of human endeavour would not avail because each one is a Means, not an End that Mind alone can comprehend it. Guru Nanak repeatedly draws our attention to the futility of self-motivated activity because it has at its core money-making urge. The first step towards this fundamental realisation is to know and convince oneself that this world is nobody's eternal home. Therefore,

it is unwise to spend one's life, energy, and resources on building *permanent* dwelling while one's own inside remains horribly *transient* and ready to collapse. Such a life-threatening venture requires full wakefulness and unflinching alertness. It is the requirement of the task that you ought to accomplish is truly titanic—it's a do or die case—not the inebriate fantasy of wild dreams!

Nobody has stated the problem with such succinctness as the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, which you will find worthwhile for deep private reflection to reckon its import:

*He who looks outside dreams
He who looks inside awakens*

This should put to rest any contradiction that my frequent comments on Science might have agitated your mind with. I am as keen and constant a student of Science as I am of many other fields. What I regularly point out is the failure of Scientists, *not* of Science. Scientists fail because they end up the unending exploration of Science by arrogance that is the hallmark of self-styled 'know-alls'. They tend to generate revulsion in my mind when they make sweeping statements like the misguided Stephen Hawking often did without ever studying what is Religion



all about. For my part, as I stay a committed 'religionist', I respect the findings of Science with illimitable devotion. In fact, the more Science teaches and amazes me with its findings and discoveries the deeper my faith in Religion grows. Yet I remain a sceptic because my doubts help me drive my faith deeper into my psychic soil much in the manner of pile foundations, which are pin-like structures for making foundations for skyscrapers. Combining doubt with conviction has given me self-charging psychosomatic batteries for fuelling and sustaining my unending quest as a Sikh [which, for me, means an eternal student].

I invoke the pithy comments of the American social philosopher and architectural critic Lewis Mumford on my averment:

Life is not possible without ultimate convictions; even the sceptic is convinced that everything is doubtful.



Guru Nanak, in his characteristic style of saying it straight with an unforgettable punch, has highlighted the futility of a longevity vis-à-vis the desire to know the extent and nature of Lord God in the following *Shabad*:

My age may be of millions of
years' duration
My staple food and drink may be
drawn from air
I may be seated in a cave my entire
life in hibernation
Utterly bereft of the sun's and moon's
luminescence
I may not get a wink of sleep in my dreams there
Even then I could not at all measure
Thy ineffable grandeur and magnificence
Such as is enshrined in Thy Holy Name...



The Guru does away with the human desire and perplexing anxiety about longevity with a flourish and a stroke of finality thus:

We are men of one single breath
Know neither life-span nor time of death
That's why, Nanak, we should pray to Him
He who's granter of life 'n' breath



Since the great Guru has used the word 'breath', I am tempted to share my curious views with

you. I feel that the English phrase “to breathe one’s last” for ‘death’ of all languages of the world is the most apt and expressive of life and its value for humans. For one thing, it has taught me that you should never give up struggle to achieve anything in life until your ‘last breath’ is exhaled because who can foretell with any certainty that success mayn’t visit you at that existentialist point of time. The other thing is that Guru Nanak has stated the case of human life-span with a punch in that its logic is what can never be rebutted. Every breath that you inhale is the only breath that you are sure to exhale and is thus the ‘last’ one. Only if you were able to reflect on this axiom deeply enough in your privacy that its intrinsic macabre truth would dawn upon you that you ought to learn how to value each breath as divine gift. Furthermore, the word ‘*Aadmi*’ is Persian while ‘*Adam*’ is Arabic—which literally translates into a ‘package of breaths’ with latter bearing a more picturesque expression. ‘*Adam*’ in Urdu consists of two parts: ‘A’ with long sound as in ‘arson’ and ‘Dam’ as in ‘Dum’ with ‘d’ as soft sound. Together the two syllables constitute a short command or request that says: “Come, Breath!” Hidden in this analysis is a long stillness of prayer addressed to the Creator, albeit unconsciously, supplicating Him for the gift of breath which, indeed, is LIFE. It should be in order to expand on this esoteric dimension. It has

been explained elsewhere in this book how the Five Elements together constitute human body that breathes [i.e. *lives*]. Breath, as the element ‘Air’, is of crucial importance in that it is both the ‘life-giver’ and the ‘speech-giver’. The moment you exhale your last breath the other four elements begin to disintegrate. Human speech made possible by ‘breath’ or ‘air’ is the most beautiful thing in the world. Speech [as well as singing and mimicking] is the only priceless commodity created by human waste—the outgoing breath that as carbon dioxide is of no use to the generator *human being*, but gives life to the plants. It is an amazing case of ‘waste’ being *naturally* recycled as something indispensable to ‘growth’.



Baliharī qudrat(i) wasiyā

Tera ant na jāyī lakkhiā

I am a sacrifice to You who are the indwelling
spirit of Nature

Your limits cannot be ascertained—
You are beyond all measure

‘*Qudrat*’ is an Arabic word which means divine power; strength; ability; valour; divine grandeur and glory; God’s manifest might. In the use of this most befitting word for “God’s Manifest



Might”, Guru Nanak liberates himself from the fancy entrapments of Poetry, Philosophy, Mythology as well as the ontological meanderings of Metaphysics, besides the lack-lustre ratiocinative cerebration of Science to state an esoteric case with a punch that is hard to ignore. While God’s Will [*Raza*] and Edict-Fiat [*Hukam*] are impossible to grasp thereby making the understanding and application of his Revelation an uphill task, the Guru asserts something which can be comprehended as well as admired in a state of joyous wonder. There is hardly anyone among the world’s seven-billion-plus peoples who does not know the power of natural calamities which bring the so-called know-all humans on their knees throughout the year in some corner of the globe. However, it is ironic that though the Scientist acknowledges the brute force of Nature and uses it as the basis for theories, hypotheses, and speculations, he considers it to be below his dignity to accept it as God’s Manifest Might. Only two conjectures are possible on this averment: Either the Scientist is too arrogant to accept it as ‘divine’ or he is too ignorant to even suspect that such a thing *really* exists under his very nose!

My inference is, therefore, simple and unambiguous. A ‘THEIST’ [devotee/devout] who is scared of exposing his Faith to the merciless scrutiny of Science is hardly religious. An

‘ATHEIST’ [scientist/researcher] who thinks it is below his dignity to acknowledge the veracity of Religion’s awesome Spiritual Realities is absolutely irrational. His belief/credo is blinder than the blind faith of an ordinary mortal who believes in the existence and dispensation of God. It is unprecedented that Guru Nanak’s Revelation lays bare the Truth thereby underlying the creation and working of the Cosmos so lucidly without getting into fruitless wordy wars with his antagonists. Since he is not philosophising, poetising, mythologizing or mystifying, he has been by God’s grace enabled to plainly describe what he has been shown in the Cosmic Drama. The Guru has testified to this unique fact himself as under:

*Jaisi main aavai khasam ki bani, taisada
kari gyaan vey Lalo*

As the Word of the Divine Groom dawns on
me, so do I express it, O Lalo



Diseases contracted from pleasures find
their remedy in pain
Euphoria of creature comforts has no need
for God-realisation
You are Lord God, the Creator;
I’m a hapless weakling
Even when I do attempt something it falls
short of completion

I am a sacrifice to You who are the
 indwelling spirit of Nature
 Your limits cannot be ascertained—
 You are beyond all measure
 Your divine flame dwells in the world
 and in it You stay
 By your formidable power
 You are Whole in every way
 You are the True Master worthy of
 our profoundest laudation
 Whosoever adores You is ferried across
 the existential ocean
 All our talk about You is finally confined
 to this one
 Whatever it is Your will to do is what
 actually gets done
 [From *Rehras Sahib* – Poetic rendition
 by the author]



Sigmund Freud, hailed as the Father of Modern Psychology, popularised the idea that desires and motivations continually erupt from the Unconscious Mind, and influence human behaviour. Since then, neurologists and psychiatrists have deepened their understanding of the multi-layered mind.

Suffering is a blessing in disguise. One's mind at once turns to God and seeks His Grace. Misery

comes to everyone. In adversity, God is remembered the most. Suffering teaches us endurance and perseverance; it teaches us Humility; above all, it teaches us resignation to the Will of God.


We remember God the most in solemn moments of sorrow, grief, misery, and suffering. We are enabled to discern the Reality of Death and the Impermanence of Life more closely and acutely by the leaping flames of burning pyres. Suffering is an unnerving reminder of the sin that we have forgotten God in the evanescent joys of living. With its purging effect on the mind we are enabled to imbibe divine virtues. No one has come in this world of their free will. The sooner one learns that it is God's Supreme Will as Indwelling, Ordaining, and Controlling Power which holds sway over the entire universe the better it is. Ironically, 'Suffering' in the Will of God unveils the true face of *Maya* that Body [the English poet Henry Longfellow had called it the "Mortal Frame"] is perishable and turns the ailing mind God-ward. This is something that can never be comprehended by the working of Logic, which can at best work only with what is seen or heard or read, *not* with what is felt.

'Suffering' in psychology is associated with psychological pain, mental pain, or emotional pain that is an unpleasant feeling of a psychological, non-physical origin. While these clearly are not equivalent terms, one systematic comparison of



theories and models of psychological pain, psychic pain, emotional pain, and suffering concluded that each describes the same profoundly unpleasant feeling. The adjective ‘psychological’ is thought to encompass the functions of beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, which may be seen as an indication for the many sources of psychological pain. One way of grouping these different sources of pain is based on the hypothesis that psychological pain is caused by frustrated psychological needs, notably, the need for love, autonomy, affiliation, and achievement, or the need to avoid harm, shame, and embarrassment. Psychological pain is believed to be an inescapable aspect of human existence.

This reminds me of Guru Nanak’s unnerving declaration:



Jo jo deekhe so so rogi
Rog rehat mera satgur jogi
Anyone and everyone I see suffers
from malady
My *Satgur*, the True Jogi, alone is
perfectly healthy

Meditation promising awesome mental health benefits is selling like hot cakes these days worldwide. The most common form of meditative practice supposedly used as therapy is “mindfulness”.

However, breath-focused exercises are also used for dealing with the stress and anxiety related to emotional pain in the pursuit of reducing physiological symptoms. Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one’s attention to experiences occurring in the present moment, which one can develop through the practice of meditation and through other training.

Another international favourite buy of the teeming millions is the so-called “Positive Thinking” purported to provide perennial happiness in the midst of epidemic suffering. Using this as a worthwhile merchandise [because it readily sells] its proponents have classified human beings into “Optimists” and “Pessimists”. An ‘Optimist’ is someone who generally keeps a *positive* attitude, has a good mood, and tends to look for a silver lining in a bog of apparent difficulties or negative circumstances. For a ‘Pessimist’, there is always something to worry about, nothing is ever quite right, bad events seem to last forever, and they outweigh the good ones. Life means living in fear, sadness or anger most of the time.

I experience mixed feelings of anger and amusement at these pervert products of ‘Globalisation’ that has hidden agenda of Multi-National Companies [MNCs] for making a quick buck and to make so much of money as may eventually empower them to rule the whole world. I say so from firsthand knowledge and

experience of a lifetime during which I learned and practised [then, gave up] ‘Transcendental Meditation’ [TM], Hypnotism, and much other variegated crap. I was self-motivated to venture into this hideous haven in order to reach at the bottom of the truth that smart sellers [I now call them ‘TV’ Gurus] exploit to fool the illiterate and the educated with equal felicity and continue to do so without any compunction of conscience. The trick is that anything novel packaged as panacea for all ills [including those that each one of us create for ourselves] has a mystique about it that attacks human gullibility readily just as doses of tranquillisers shot at a maverick elephant calm it down—instantly.

While Guru Nanak has repeatedly asserted that pain and pleasure—and all the opposites as are extant in the Cosmos and known to human beings—are inseparable part of the Divine Sport [*Leela*] I have as an architect figured out the truth in my own way deploying what I call the “architectonics” of Architecture. Space is a Void [Negative]; Form is Fullness [Positive]. The two are complementary, *not* subtractive. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to assert that without these opposites being there in the first place, there would be no existence. To validate this somewhat sweeping statement, I would like to offer my two definitions: An OPTIMIST invents the aeroplane; a PESSIMIST, the parachute!

Hoping that I have made the moot point clear let me say that if you are a seeker of pleasure you have no escape from pain.



They alone eventually escape the noose of
messenger of death
Seekers who have meditated on
Lord God in every breath
[SGGS, Page 11]



The Holy Name has been forgotten
by the blind
In utter darkness stumble those
who are self-willed
Neither their advent nor departure
would ever end
Fruitless they wander in life and
in death stilled
[SGGS, Page 14]



In the light of the foregoing exposition, it is absolutely wrong and unfair to say, as several scholars mindlessly do, that Sikh *Philosophy* was crystallised in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* when the Last and Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh (c. 1666–1708 CE) declared it to be the *Eternal*



Living Guru of the Sikh Faith—and, therefore, no human being was to be worshipped as *Guru*. I have reiterated time and again ever since I earned my second PhD on *Gurbani* in 2000 that the revealed Word enshrined in the Holy Book is neither mythology nor poetry nor philosophy, nor even mysticism of the popular brand touted to be the ‘Religion of the Élite’. The Revealed Word called “*Dhur ki Bani*” is the spontaneous recording of direct perception of countless Spiritual Realities as they emanate from *The Source* and were revealed to Guru Nanak, the Founder of the Sikh Faith, and his Nine Successors. This historic fact has been corroborated by him in his own proclamation:

*Jaisi main aavai khasam ki bani, taisada
kari gyaan, Vey Lalo*

As the Word of Divine Husband dawns on me,
so I communicate its knowledge, O Lalo



GLOSSARY OF MYSTICAL TERMS

AAB-I-HYAAT, literally, ‘water of life’ is used by Sufis to denote ‘Elixir of Immortality’. It is the divine current of spirituality that provides self-renewing energy and sustenance to all living beings. In Sufi terminology, the Spring of the

water of life (*Chashmah-i-Aab-i-Hyaat*) is the inner living Name, and anyone gaining access to that Name can drink from the spring of Water of Life, and never dies. Anyone who tastes it becomes immortal. According to Rumi, to find the Water of Life the seeker must undertake the interior “journey” into the divine “sea” [Spirit], leaving behind the exterior “journey” on the “land” [Matter] of mundane existence. The long-drawn, arduous exercise involved is akin to Guru Nanak’s “Saram Khand” access to which is preceded by many years of stringent spiritual endeavour.



ADI PURKH: the first or primal Being; the primordial Lord; so called because He has always existed from before time, and before creation, yet is omnipresent in His creation.



AGAM PURKH: the inaccessible Lord; the Supreme Being:

My inaccessible Lord, knower of the inward
Makes man see with an impartial eye
With support of the Saints’ society
One embraces affection for the Lord

[SGGS, Page 966]



AKAL PURKH: Timeless Being; the eternal Being ,
beyond all change and dissolution; the Being outside
of Time; the immortal lord; the positive power.

We are birds, O my wandering being
And *Akal Purkh* is the tree
[SGGS, Page 235]



AKATH KATHA: ‘Akath’ means unutterable, and
‘Katha’ denotes Story—explanation, description,
exposition or message of a religious nature. Human
language, as a creation of *Maya* [Matter] is an
‘outer’-ance, an expression of one who utters. The
Lord’s utterance, that which emanates from Him,
is the Word—His Language, His Speech or
Discourse which brings the creation into being.
However, it is unspoken because no physical words
are involved. Mystics have thus described it as
unspoken and indescribable. In this sense, *Akath
Katha* refers to the divine ‘exposition’, ‘story’ or
‘discourse’ concerning God and his creation, ‘told’
within the unspoken mystic Word:

Ineffable and true is the Discourse of the
perfect Lord
The light of the luminous Lord is all-pervasive
[SGGS, Page 897]



Within the world, the mortal is
engrossed in doubt
And realises not the incomprehensible Lord
Because His discourse is ineffable
[SGGS, Page 1019]



AKHAND KIRTAN means ceaseless or unending
Music, the unbroken Song:

Says Nanak, they who have the perfect
true Guru as their guide
Enjoy the incessant lauding of praises
Of the Lord as their food and dainty
[SGGS, Page 261]



AKKHAR [which means ‘letter’], metaphorically,
is the creative Word or divine Power:

Nanak, the Lord Himself has uttered
forth the Word
Doubt departs from him who receives the gift
[SGGS, Page 150]



All the Vedas, the religious books of the
Muslims

The *Smritis* and *Shastras*

By reading these, salvation is not obtained

He who, by Guru's instruction,

utters the one Name

Gathers pristine glory

[SGGS, Page 747]



In the Lord's Word is the installation
of the three worlds

By joining together the words, the
Vedas are studied

The words tell what is written in
Shastras, *Smritis*, and *Puranas*

In letters are written the hymns, discourses,
and lectures

By means of letters is described the
way of escape from dread and doubt

The words narrate the religious rites,
worldly acts, piety, and religion

In the entire visible world is contained the
indestructible Lord

Nevertheless, O Nanak, the supreme
Lord remains unattached

[SGGS, Page 261]



AMRIT: nectar, elixir of life, ambrosia; sweetened consecrated water administered in The Khalsa baptism or initiation ceremony instituted by the Last and Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh when he founded *The Khalsa* [Commonwealth of *The Pure* called Saint-Soldiers] on Baisakhi in 1699.



AMRIT VELA: ambrosial hour, early morning, wee hours of the morning. Since there is no simultaneity in circadian time across the globe it is safe to fix *Amrit Vela* at two-three hours before sunrise regardless of where you may be at the stated time.



ANTARJAMI: inner controller or regulator; thus the inner pervader or knower; the knower within; one who knows what is going on within another person; one who knows the secrets of the heart; hence, God who dwells within and knows everything. Often translated as omniscient or all-knowing, *Antarjami* refers to the Lord's omniscience of the individual rather than the entire creation.



APAAR: without boundary; boundless, endless, limitless, infinite: hence, uncrossable, beyond

reach, beyond limit, difficult to surmount;
unknowable; descriptive of God and the *Guru*:

Lofty, grand and infinite is my Lord
And beyond reach is His court
It is through the Name
That one is blessed with glorification and
magnificence
O much beloved is the Lord unto Nanak
[SGGS, Page 1003]

The word also appears in combination as *Apar*
Apaar (without a second, unequalled); hence,
infinite:

Infinite, boundless, inaccessible and
inapprehensible
Is the Lord, and His worth cannot be
ascertained by speaking
[SGGS, Page 634]

ABINASHI: indestructible, imperishable, everlasting,
unchangeable, undying, immortal, deathless;
descriptive of God, and thus of the soul also
the perfect *Guru*. The true Master is one with
The Source:

Eternal and immortal is my true *Guru*
He comes not, nor goes He
He Himself is imperishable Lord
He who is contained amongst all
[SGGS, Page 759]




BRAHMAN: frequently used in the Vedas and the Upanishads, this word has gone through many connotations and finally accepted to mean ‘Absolute Reality’, outside of which nothing exists or has reality. *Brahman* was perceived to be the divine Cause of the universe from which all created things emanate and to which they return. Those who erroneously believe that *Gurbani* is a rehashing of *Sanatana Dharma* sacred literature must note this moot point with utmost attention. The connotation widely accepted by the scholars of genres is that Brahman represents an abstract principle of truth. Guru Nanak Dev discountenances this view and begins the recording of his Revelation with an unambiguous use of the new term ‘*Karta Purkh*’ to stress an historic departure that the Primal Person is a Primordial Being, not merely Reality—and Truth is His primary attribute, clearly showing that He is both the Cause and Cause-Maker as the Creator of the Universe and everything contained in it. Moreover, in this



comprehensive capacity, He both participates [*Nanak vigsai veparvahu*] and stays aloof [*Niranjan*] from the created world.

MYTHOLOGY AND EMASCULATION OF THE HINDU MIND



Often amazed, frequently bewildered, and always confused Man, the Wise [that is what *Homo sapiens* to which species he belongs means], has continuously felt the gnawing need to explain the Phenomenal World vis-à-vis his own life shrouded in the Mystery of Death. This undiminished urge in tandem with his lasting love for story has goaded him to produce mythology regardless where he is geographically located on the globe. Nobel Laureate TS Eliot has called Mythology the purest creation of the human imagination. Added to this Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist since Isaac Newton has declared Imagination to be superior to Knowledge. Going by these awesome proclamations from the world's greatest men, it seems to me that the Indians excel other fellow beings inhabiting the Planet Earth at least in Imagination as their copious corpus of Mythology unmatched for its diversity and complexity proves. In a separate thesis I have convincingly shown how Geography encompassing the Natural Environment and incredibly varied Climate determines everything from silly notions

of four human races, through customs and cultures, to religious beliefs, creeds, castes, and ethnic idiosyncrasies. The Indian climate has the distinction of having four to six seasons in an annual cycle. However, despite its radical variations, the Indian climate is people-friendly, so much so that we Indians can live and work outdoors for most part of the year.

The country's natural endowment coupled with its very rich natural resources makes it possible to subsist on natural products with little human intervention. This seems to be quite the case that urged Max Mueller to declare that the Vedas are pastoral literature. Whatever controversy the scholars and historians may be fond of raising and nurturing I find it perfectly plausible that the Vedas, the oldest books of the world, could not have been produced indoors as unbeatable compulsion of a harsh climate such as in Canada or Russia. At any rate, the ancient Indians living outdoors cultivated an abiding love for Mother Nature, so much so that looking for ways to explain the Phenomenal World their Imagination had the better of them to ascribe the function of every element to the ministry of a god or goddess—pushing the Intellect aside to produce the sacred literature.

People so disposed as to be virtually free most of the time looked downwards to produce the Ayurveda and gazing at the stars gave birth to

astronomy and astrology. In the exciting carefree leisure it was only natural that their love for concocting and telling stories would scale vertiginous heights of flights of fancy to produce unparalleled Mythology which in course of time became a habit of the mind so hard to break that till today after centuries, the country's Collective Unconscious believes more in stories, fables, and legends than what Science can show directly with a blinding glare. This genetic love for story was so compulsive that it found its way into the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and whatever else Indians take overbearing pride in possessing. The cunning among the ancients such as Manu [supposed to be the Original Man] using imagination, gone awry, conjured up a world of castes favouring his kith and kin with progressively dwindling considerateness for others and produced the notorious caste system that no hydrogen bomb or technological weaponry can destroy.

Overwhelming love for story meant unceasing deployment of Imagination until Intellect got pushed back to let writing and recitation of *Mantras* on scores of ceremonies beginning with birth through the naming of babies to last rites on the cremation ground. The subtropical lethargy as a genetic endowment came to be treated as something sublime and spiritual, so much so that the Six Shastras [actually Six Schools of Philosophy] abhor an

effort of will and turn this discipline into a derivative of the Vedas [unlike in the West where it is stringent *intellectual* discipline]. The result so studiously built by the Collective Unconscious threw up at least two worlds: the Virtual and the Actual, with the latter left to its own blighted fate because the clerics kept hammering into indolent Indians' minds notions of the other and better world [such as *Swarg*; *Vaikunth*] up there somewhere denouncing this earthy terra firma to be *Maya* [Illusion] worthy only of abandonment—so that the higher castes could have all the fun at the cost of Shudras and others that they had themselves on the sly condemned to multiple miseries.

Its goes without saying that Guru Nanak categorically rejected the authority of the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures though he used umpteen symbols from the ancient folklore and hallowed traditions to teach especially the commoners lessons from his Revelation centred inexorably around *IK OANKAR*. For instance, when he uses the principal Hindu deities he hastens to add that Lord God has created countless Brahmas, Vishnus, and Shivas making it clear that these are His creations, not independent creators. It was his way of using the familiar to introduce the unfamiliar to wean the teeming millions from the imaginary creatures and worlds of Mythology. Talking of the three Hindu deities in *Japuji Sahib* the Guru asserts



that God oversees them but they cannot even see Him, and concludes his pronouncement by exclaiming: This is Lord's mind-boggling mystery! Even when discountenancing an idea, a superstition or myth or fable or misleading social or cultural custom, Guru Nanak has used the most civilised language.

Sample his incomparable civility in Pauri 18 of *Japuji Sahib*. When he had to perforce describe the presence of unimaginable negative forces he hastens to beg God's pardon while declaring himself to be the lowliest among the lowly [note the two *italicised* lines]. All his life Guru Nanak nursed an active concern for the amelioration of the human condition and untiringly struggled to lift the hopeless and helpless above the torpor of superstitions and prejudices. His singular agendum was to uplift Humanity far above caste-class discrimination and ruthless exploitation by the priests and the powers-that-be so that everybody could become part of a healthy and holistic model of a new social order and participate in the celebrations of Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

PAURI-EIGHTEEN

Countless fools see but mindlessly
Countless thieves thrive on ill-gotten money
Countless despots with their might oppress

Countless cut-throats shed blood
and suppress
Countless are the sinners who depart in sinning
Countless are the liars who're always lying
Countless perverts subsist on ill-pretence
Countless back-bite and burden their conscience
Nanak, the lowliest of all the known lowly
After deep thought makes this humble homily
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable,
Formless One



BRAHM is the name for the supreme Lord:

Within every heart is hid the Lord
And in all the hearts and bodies is His light
[SGGS, Page 597]



As the ray blends with the sun, and water
becomes water
So merges the human light in the supreme
Light, and becomes whole
Now I see the Lord, hear of the Lord
And narrate but the one Lord
The Supreme Soul is the creator of the world
Without the Lord I know no other
[SGGS, Page 846]



CHARAN KAMAL: lotus-feet; holy feet

CHARAN DHOORH: dust of a holy person's feet

CHARAN PAHUL: initiation ceremony in which the novitiate drinks water touched by or poured over the preceptor's toes



DARBAR: a royal court; a hall of audience. Since the Lord is commonly referred to as the King or Sovereign, He has a court, which refers to the presence of God or to the focus of the devotee's attention:

Of all the courts, Thine is the true court
And, among the protection-givers, thou
art supreme

[SGGS, Page 507]

Darbar has also been used in reference to the presence of a Master, and in other contexts such as the *Darbar of Dharam Rai* [Lord of Death]



DAATA/DAATAAR: giver, donor, benefactor, provider, a generous person; but more befittingly, an epithet of God as the beneficent and munificent Giver of everything:

Why praise the created one
Praise thou Him, who creates all
Nanak, without the one Lord, there is not
another donor
Praise thou the Creator-Lord, who has created
the universe
Eulogise thou the beneficent Lord
He who gives sustenance to all
[SGGS, Page 1238-39]



DYAL: the merciful or compassionate One: the merciful Lord or Being; the merciful God, the Lord of compassion; the merciful, gracious, kind, beneficent, compassionate Lord, who bestows knowledge of Himself through the mystic Name:


O my merciful Master-God
Ever grant me the gift of Thy Name's
meditation

[SGGS, Page 91]



O my beneficent Lord of compassion
My Master
He alone realises Thee, whom Thou blesseth
[SGGS, Page 563]





ETERNITY: The divine Reality beyond Space, Time, and all realms of the creation; the condition of timeless existence; the eternal region; the state of God, where all is sublime oneness of spiritual timeless being. Time is a measure of change, which implies differentiation between one thing and another; for without differentiation there can be no change and no time. It also implies a differentiation into observer and observed. The first manifestation of time, in essence or seed-form, where time is so subtle that it mimics eternity, is in the highest reaches of the universal mind where the first hints of form and diversity originate. The eternity of God lies beyond all such differentiation. He is commonly described as eternity, the eternal One, and so on.



GOD: Guru Nanak Dev proclaims his Revelation by describing God as One [Numeral One—to avoid ambiguity or misinterpretation] Omkar/Oankar—in *Japuji* as under:

MOOL MANTRA

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, Unimical
Imperishable Icon
Beyond the Cycle of Birth and Death
Self-Existent
By the Grace of God, the Guru
This Creed is proclaimed



Contemplating His Glory by a ceaseless Chant



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



However, a caution must be sounded especially for those scholars who call it ‘concept of God’ in ‘Sikhism’. What Guru Nanak has given is *description*, not ‘concept’ which means “what exists in the mind as a representation (as of something comprehended) or as a formulation (as of a plan).” Also, the word ‘Sikhism’ belittles and devalues the significance and magnificence of this grand new religion that focuses on singing

praises to the Glory of God by jettisoning mythology, poetry, philosophy, logic, and mysticism of the popular kinds. It is a narrative sprung from the artesian wells of *Sahj* [Unconditioned Spontaneity] in direct perception of Lord God in the midst of his awesome creation. The suffix 'ism' can be attached to any noun to form a word to connote an ideology [Communism] or system [Pragmatism], etc. Therefore, the terms 'Sikh Faith' and '*Sikhi*' are the only appropriate appellations for the world's youngest and most dynamic Religion.

Pauri-19

Countless are Thy Names
 Thy abodes countless
 Countless are Thy realms impossible of access
 Saying even countless is a burden like
 that of sin
 Yet without words one can't Name Him, much
 less adore Him
 Through words one gains wisdom, and sings
 of His mysterious ways
 Through the language of words one writes and
 his ideas conveys
 With words is destiny on everyone's
 forehead write
 But who could on the Divine Writer's
 Forehead write it?

As He ordains, so one's lot one would get
 Over the whole expanse of creation extends

His Name

Beyond His Name lies there not a single domain
 I haven't got the power to fathom or to surmise
 Not am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
 What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
 Changeless is Thy nature, Ye, the immutable
 Formless One



GOBIND: This epithet is used in *Gurbani* for Lord God, *not* Krishna which Hindus believe to be the eighth *Avatara* [incarnation] of Lord Vishnu.

O my omnipotent, unfathomable and
 omnipresent Lord

Show thy mercy unto me
 Ferry Thou me across the very terrible, blind
 well of the world
 [SGGS, Page 1273]



My great Lord is unapproachable,
 incomprehensible
 Primal, immaculate, and formless
 [SGGS, Page 448]



GURU: the most commonly understood meaning of this Sanskrit word is “one who destroys darkness (Gu) with light (Ru)” although it has 34 different connotations; for example, one who is great/large/ageless/powerful. However, Guru Nanak has its meaning to near-God-like grandeur by calling the Lord God as his “Guru”. Furthermore, he has assigned its divine power to *Shabda*, the Revealed Word, meaning thereby that no human being can take and perform its unique role. Guru Gobind Singh put his historic stamp on *Shabda* when he declared that *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* would be the *Living Eternal Guru* of the Sikh Faith.

Let no man in the world live in delusion
Without a *Guru* none can cross over
to the other shore



I bow at His Feet constantly, and pray to
Him, the *Guru*
The True *Guru*, has shown me the Way



HARI NAAM is a popular appellation for the mystic Name [*Naam*] or creative Power of God. Guru Ramdas exhorts the soul to meditate on *Hari Naam*:

O my soul, meditate thou
On the Lord's Name, the treasure of bliss
Thiswise, thou shalt obtain honour at the
Lord's court
All those who remember their God are
ferried across
O my soul
Attentively hearken to the Lord's Name



HARI RAI: God the King; the supreme Ruler of all; a name frequently used in Gurbani:

God the King is the dispeller of sin
The destroyer of dread, and the ocean of
peace
Merciful to the meek, and the killer of pain
Him, O Nanak, ever contemplate thou
[SGGS, Page 927]



HARI RAS, literally, means Juice of God; hence, God's Elixir, divine Dew, and the Lord's creative Power understood as the divine drink for eternal sustenance of the soul. *Ras* implies something of sweet, pleasant, and enjoyable flavour. Therefore, similar terms include *Naam Ras*, *Maha Ras*,

Amrit Ras, and so on. The expression is used extensively in *Gurbani*. It is said to be present within all souls:

By Guru's instruction
I have realised the unstruck Music
And enjoy the divine Relish
Of God's Name
Says Nanak: the Lord Himself
Who is omnipotent to do all deeds, has met me
[SGGS, Page 921]

When man tastes God's Elixir
He instantly becomes immaculate
Nanak, true is the glory of those
They who are imbued with the Name

INFINITY: Usually defined as endless Space or Time, infinity or the infinite, in a mystic sense, refers to that which is prior to Space and Time in the creative process of the universe; hence, the state or condition of God understood mystically, Space and Time are the creations of the greater or universal mind, first coming into being at the highest point of the causal realm. Their first manifestation is as the fine or subtle essence of what becomes Space and Time as they are perceived in the physical universe. In that high

spiritual realm, space appears to stretch indefinitely, giving the illusion of infinity. Likewise, past, present, and the future collapse into one, giving the illusion of eternity. True infinity and eternity, however, lie beyond Space and Time altogether. It is the differentiation of the divine oneness caused by the Mind that results in the illusion of Space and Time.




INTELLECT is the capacity for thinking, reasoning, and understanding, as opposed to feeling and desiring. This word is used by scholars to translate terms such as the Greek, *Logos* and *Nous*, and the Arabic, *'aql*, often when the terms 'soul' or 'spirit' would be more appropriate, as in such expressions as the 'intellectual world' or 'intelligible world', where the 'spiritual world' would make better sense. However, Guru Nanak used it in characteristic precision that goes beyond sentimental religiosity as under:

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, Page 1245]



Let by Reason Lord be served lovingly
And in doing so honour won eventually
Reason-illuminated study gives delight
And verily leads to profound insight
Reason enables charity to be given away
Says Nanak: This is the only one true way
In all other means, the Satan leads astray



KARAN KAARAN: Doer/Maker of causes; hence, the Instrument of Causes, the Cause of causes; the Impulse, the Act or the Cause behind all lesser causes; First Cause; an epithet of God portraying Him as the sole Originator and Sustainer of all that exists. *Karan* is the essential Means, that by which the universe has come into being—with its subsequent multiplicity of causes (*kaaran*) and effects. The expression appears in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, along with variants such as *Karanhaar*, *Karnehaar*, and *karan Karaavanhaar*. Guru Arjan says that the Creator is the prime cause behind all aspects of the creation:

O my mind, have thou the support of the
Lord's Name
Realise thou Him, who didst create thee
The one Lord is the Cause of all causes
[SGGS, Page 1007]



KARTA/KARTAR: a name of God, since everything happens by the divine will, and He is the Author, Doer, and Creator of everything. Karta is Maker; Kartar is Creator. The words are also used in terms such as Karta Purkh [Creator-Being or Lord] and Karte ka Karta [Creator of the creator]:

Whatever works the creator does
Seems not unpleasant to my mind
By the grace of the holy company
And the Saints, my sleeping soul has awakened
[SGGS, Page 215]



My honourable God, Thou art the Maker and
Creator
Save me as it pleases Thee, O God
And grant me the life of meditation
[SGGS, Page 54]



KHASHM: husband, spouse, master; hence, beloved. An epithet of Supreme Being, particularly in imagery representing the soul as the wife or bride and Lord as the divine Husband, Groom, or Beloved:

Those maids on whom the Lord casts His
glance of favour
Become happy wives
She who recognises her Spouse
Places her body and soul before Him
[SGGS, Page 38]



KIRTAN is the singing of hymns or paeans of glory to the Lord to the accompaniment of instruments set to tune [often prescribed] in a raga [Mode of Indian classical music; the Sikh Gurus have used 31 Ragas and each *Shabad* requires its singing to the stipulated mode/tune] to qualify as “Shabad Kirtan”; otherwise it is *Shabad Gaayan*. In my assessment, Guru Nanak Dev is the first Prophet blessed with knowledge of *Shastriya Sangeet* to have used it for Kirtan and elevated it as a means of communion with the Lord thereby imparting to it a dimension of divinity. This was a rocket-like upward thrust that uplifted Music from a mere instrument of entertainment or personal indulgence to the level of a veritable vehicle of gaining divine grace.

The soul is satiated
By lovingly singing Lord’s praises
[SGGS, Page 299]

However, *Shabad Kirtan* performed in ecstatic devotion or heard in trance-like receptivity raises the consciousness from the mundane [gross/terrestrial] to the spiritual [subtle/celestial] levels to facilitate merger of an individual’s self with Lord’s Self. Therefore, mystically, it is listening to the divine Melody within; hence, the eternal reverberation of the divine Music throughout creation—in which case it is called *Hari Kirtan* [God’s Music] and *Akhand Kirtan* [the unbroken Song].

This is the state of consciousness evocatively described by Guru Nanak Dev in Pauri-27 of *Japuji Sahib*:

What’s His abode like, whence He does
His business carry
From where does He oversee and sustain
all His creation
Countless melodies are struck of
a staggering variety
And countless minstrels always sing
in heady elation
Many are the musical measures which
praise Thee
With celestial bards singing to the tunes in
harmony
Air, water, fire express Thy glory in
charming music





Dharamraja's tunes are also
profoundly mystic
Chitra Gupta keeps record of all
actions human
For *Dharamraja* to adjudicate thereon
Sing of Thee *Isar, Brahma, and Parvati*
All of them created and blessed by Thee
Seated on his throne, Indra bows to
Thee in singing
Engrossed in the very midst of many a godling
Miracle men sing of Thee entranced in *Samadhi*
The saints, in singing, fix their
thoughts on Thee
The celibate, the virtuous, and the
contented—one and all
Pay obeisance to Thee as do the valiant
heroes too
Scholars of the Vedas and the great sages extol
Thee, O Lord, age aft age—the ages through
Exalted, too, are Thou by bewitching maids
From heavens, earths, and the nether hades
Praised are Ye by all the gems Thou did create
And so by the places of pilgrimage,
in all sixty-eight
By all the four modes of life-generation
Thy Name is kept in external glorification
All terrestrial regions and celestial spheres
Thou all the cosmos forever reveres
And in so doing are they themselves sustained

They alone have the privilege of singing
of Thy glory
Who have first Thy choicest blessings obtained
And thus deeply steeped abide in
the love of Thee
Just how many more, Nanak, also sing of God
Are beyond my imagination's wildest flight
He alone is eternal, unchanging Lord
His Name remains true—beyond all spite
He has authored all this vast creation, He
Is, has always been, and forever shall be
Having created beings of many hues and kinds
As enchanting *Maya* of supreme physical beauty
God looks after His grand handiwork,
as He minds
The cosmic business, and sustains it by
His gracious decree
Whatever pleases Him, happens—
and has His nod
King of Kings is the Sole Lord God
And inviolable is His Edict-Fiat
Nanak's own life is propped by it



John of the Cross has used the term “silent Music” in his *Spiritual Canticle* to mean that it is the divine Sound heard within the soul:

The sonorous rivers, the whisper of
amorous breezes
The tranquil night, at the time of the rising of
the dawn
The silent Music, the sounding Solitude
The supper that recreates and enkindles love

John of the Cross equates this “spiritual Sound” with the “Voice of many harpers who harped upon their harps, as described in Revelations. This was not material music, he emphasises, but spiritual.



MAHALLA is Arabic word which means Division, Quarter, Neighbourhood, Ward, Urban District.

MAHLA is a term followed by a numeral to indicate which Guru is the author of a certain hymn enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

MAHILA is Hindi word for woman. Since innumerable words adapted from various languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, etc have modified spellings, I am convinced, that the word ‘Mahla’ is used in the sense of soul-bride of the Divine Groom. The word ‘Mahalla’ connoting Division, Quarter,

etc. does not fit the situation because these connotations suggest address and location. Why would the Gurus need to record their addresses in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which is Holy Book in a class by itself? It is an exclusive compendium of soul’s unremitting longings to unite with its Creator, Lord God—and neither history is contained in it nor are biographical sketches of Guru-Authors.

Note: For a fuller exposition of these three terms please move to Section 9: Other Dimensions of Divinity.

MANTRA is a sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, word or phonemes, or group of words in Sanskrit believed by practitioners to have psychological and/or spiritual powers. A *mantra* may or may not have a syntactic structure or literal meaning.

The earliest *mantras* were composed in Vedic Sanskrit in India, and are at least 3000 years old. *Mantras* now exist in various schools of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. In Japanese Shingon tradition, the word *Shingon* means mantra. Similar hymns, antiphons, chants, compositions, and concepts are found in Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Christianity, and elsewhere.

The use, structure, function, importance, and types of *mantras* vary according to the school and philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism. Mantras serve a central role in *tantra*. In this school, mantras



are considered to be a sacred formula and a deeply personal ritual, effective only after initiation. In other schools of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism or Sikhism, initiation is not a requirement.

Mantras come in many forms, including *ṛc* (verses from the Rig Veda for example) and *saman* (musical chants from the Sama Veda for example). They are typically melodic, mathematically structured meters, believed to be resonant with numinous qualities. At its simplest, the word ॐ (Aum, Om) serves as a *mantra*. In more sophisticated forms, *mantras* are melodic phrases with spiritual interpretations such as a human longing for truth, reality, light, immortality, peace, love, knowledge, and action. Some *mantras* have no literal meaning, yet are musically uplifting and spiritually meaningful.



NARAYAN/NARAIN: Lord, God. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Narayan is the supreme and all-pervading Lord. Guru Arjan says:

On seeing the form, be thou not misled,
O fool
False is the world's love for lust
None is allowed to stay in this world
Eternal is the one Lord alone
[SGGS, Page 1077]



Night and day, the mortal ever wanders
for the sake of wealth
But rare is the one among millions
Who enshrines the Lord in his mind, O Nanak
[SGGS, Page 1427]



NATH: Lord, patron, master, husband, support, helper, protector; an epithet of God, the creative Power and Master:

He is master of the meek, and the Giver
of peace to all
Nanak's mind is imbued with the love of
God's feet
[SGGS, Page 154]



NIRAKAR/NIRANKAR: Without form; formless; hence, the formless One; the Supreme Being. The Lord is said to be beyond all form, attributes, qualities of differentiations; He cannot be likened to any form in the creation; He is One, without division. It is His creation that has form and diversity:

I pay homage to one God and saintly
true Guru

The formless One is in the beginning
The middle and the end

[SGGS, Page 250]



NIRANJAN: Immaculate One; One without stain or untouched by Maya. The supreme Lord; the word is specifically used for the highest level or aspect of the Godhead.



NIRBHAY/NIRBHAU: Without fear; fearless, undaunted, brave; the fearless One; descriptive of the supreme Lord, of the creative Power, of a Master and of a soul who attains union with God. Since God is the creator of all, dwelling within all, having full knowledge of all things, there is no power greater than He. There is also nothing other than Him. Therefore, He has no one and nothing of which to be afraid. Man, however, generally feels separate from everything, and there are many things beyond his power to comprehend, much less control. He cannot control his own mind, nor can he dictate the events of his life, nor does he know the future. He is therefore prone to fear and anxiety. The

only escape from fear is to become one with the One who is beyond all fear. The source of all fear and uncertainty is thus removed. Man becomes God, and is thereby freed from all fear and doubt.

The Lord has inscribed the writ of fear
on the heads of all

Nanak, the true formless Lord alone is
fearless

[SGGS, Page 464]




NIRVAIR: Without enmity; without hatred; free from hostility; hence, amicable, friendly; a human virtue, also used descriptively for the Supreme Being. Enmity arises between people only when there is division, competition or lack of knowledge and understanding. The Lord, on the other hand, is an ocean of oneness (Unicity) and love. There is nothing outside Him, He has complete knowledge and everything is contained within His love. From His point of view, the creation is nothing but waves and vibrations of His love, which Guru Nanak has called His language. Naturally, therefore, He has no enmity towards anyone. Hence, in the *Mool Mantra*, with which the Gurbani enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is launched, Guru Nanak Dev describes God as “without fear, without enmity”.



A Master or Guru, too, being a personification of the Lord, is a living expression of freedom from all forms of ill will:

O my Uninimical, omnipotent, divine,
and beneficent true *Guru*
I am a sinner, and Thou my pardoner
[SGGS, Page 1141]



PRITAM: Beloved; beloved one, dearest one, favourite one; friend, lover. Sweetheart, husband; mystically, the divine Beloved; the Lord or master, the beloved of the soul:

Thinking that someone will annul
my agonies
I am tired of making many friends
By meeting my beloved my woes ended
And I have attained union with the Lord
The truthful person has true reputation
He possesses the wealth of truth, and
truth he earns
Having become virtuous, O Nanak
They who meet the Guru separate not again
[SGGS, Page 37]



RABAB [also spelled ‘Rubab’] is a two- or three-stringed mediaeval instrument played with a bow, like a violin. In Sufi writings, it is symbolic of the cry, “Return!” voiced by God to summon the wayfarer [that is Soul lost in the *Sahara of Desires* and thus endlessly chasing mirages to quench its insatiable thirst] back home.

Thy slave dances and sings of
Thine excellences
He plays upon the *Rabab* [rebeck]
tambourine, cymbals, and anklets
And thus Thy slave hears the divine Music
[SGGS, Page 381]



RAM: Dark-coloured; pleasing, charming, delightful, beautiful. However, it must not be confused the name of Ramchandra, the hero of the epic Ramayana. It is used by the Sikh Gurus in the sense of all-pervading or the indwelling spirit of all creation authored by Lord God.

No one can say anything of a mind
stitched in Lord's Name
With his consciousness conjoined with the
Word he enjoys bliss
Keep me in state as Thou will, but let Thy
Name be my life's foundation
[SGGS, Page 62]



SACHCHA PAATSHAAH: True Monarch or
Emperor; metaphorically, the Lord or Master:

The bliss of the Name is akin to owning
houses and mansions
And Thy favouring glance is like family for me
That is the Edict-Fiat which pleases Thee
To say more is greatly beyond reach
Nanak, the true King makes decisions
Without seeking another's counsel
[SGGS, Pages 16-17]



SACH KHAND: The realm of truth; the region
of reality; the eternal realm whose governing
lord or ruler has been called *Sat Purkh*. *Sach
Khand* is the final destination of the soul; the
realisation of Sat Purkh is its ultimate aim. Guru
Nanak, using the term in Japuji, describes the
wonders of eternity:

The Realm of Truth is where God himself
reposes
And casts His gracious glance, always
watching o'er
That realm houses all the continents and universes
Whose limits nobody can by any
means even explore
Abide in that realm all forms of worlds of creation
Untiring a-whirl in submission to His will
God sees them, enjoys them, in divine elation
To describe its limits, Nanak, is a task uphill
[Japuji: Pauri 37]



SAHIB: Lord, master; honourable sir; in *Gurbani*,
it is an epithet of the Lord.

Unchanging is the venerable Sire, true
His Name; His speech is love infinite
We only ask and implore—and so graciously
He gives it
What can we offer the Giver for a
glimpse of His court
How prayers must be worded to melt His heart
Meditate on the True Name's glory in the
ambrosial hours
Good deeds beget good life, but salvation His
grace confers
The Omnipotent is All-Holy, Nanak avers
[Japuji: Pauri 4]



TIRATH: place of pilgrimage, pilgrimage centre

TIRATH YATRA: Pilgrimage

TIRATH YATRI: Pilgrim



WAHIGURU/WAHEGURU/WAHGURU: in joyous wonder the soul exclaims: “Hail the *Guru*; He is wonderful”. In Sikh Faith it is an expression of wonder on realising the highest form of the Master or the Guru, as in “*Wahiguru! Wahiguru!*”—Glorious Master! Wonderful Master! Blessed Master!” As a Sikh term for God it is repeated *ad infinitum* by the devout all over the world every day.

Thou hast created eighty-four lakhs of
species

And given to them sustenance since the dawn
of time

O my blessed Guru, it is through Thy gift that
thine attendants

Remain fulfilled all the ages through

[SGGS, Page 1403]



WAH-I-GURU [also spelled ‘Waheguru’] is an acronym of four letters: W/V, H, G, and R which, respectively, stand for Vishnu, Hari, Gobind, and

Ram. These are four names by which God was popularly known as in Four Yugas [*Satyuga*, *Tretayuga*, *Dwaparayuga*, and *Kaliyuga*] in Hinduism. The idea was to underscore the fact that though these Names of God may be coined by different communities they yet, by virtue of their sacrosanctity, belong to the whole world. Guru Nanak says, “I am a sacrifice because all the many names that thou have, O Lord, entice my heart...!” Oankar, Om, Ram, Allah-hoo, et al are all God’s Names by which Mystics have christened Him and continue to do so. Dr Mohan Singh Diwana—Mystic, Scholar, Poet, and Polyglot—used to tell me that Guru Gobind Singh has coined as many as 2,000 Names of the Lord as are absolutely original. All the Names used by various Bhagats whose Bani is enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* testify to this incontrovertible fact.

There is thus no room for unnecessary controversy in which some devout indulge merely to establish that everything in the Sikh Faith has nothing to do with Hinduism—the precedent religion of India with nearly one billion followers. My credo is that whatever happens on Planet Earth that God has installed as a Workshop for the Practice of *Dharma* [Cosmic Moral Law] and props up in any corner of the Globe is *Human Creation* inspired by Divine Light and, therefore, belongs to the

entire *Homo sapiens* species. Anyone who has correctly grasped the import of Guru Nanak's Bani would readily subscribe to this crucial cosmopolitan view.

Meaning of the word *Waheguru*: The meaning of *Waheguru* is known to many people. But I am still writing it to complete this part of the book as there might be some out there who are new to *Sikhi* and do not know the meaning of the word.

Let's go back to Guru Nanak Parkash.

ਚੋਪਈ ॥
 ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਾਮਨ ਤੇ ਵਧਿ ਐਸੇ । ਸੇ ਕਰਿ ਅਰਥ ਬਖਾਨੇ
 ਜੈਸੇ:-
 'ਵਾਹਿ' ਨਾਮੁ ਅਚਰਜ ਕੇ ਹੋਈ । ਅਚਰਜ ਤੇ ਪਰਿ ਉਕਤਿ ਨ
 ਕੋਈ ॥੬੨॥
 'ਗੋ' ਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਅਗਯਾਨ ਅਨਿਤ । 'ਰੋ' ਪਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਿਯੋ ਜਿਨ
 ਚਿਤੁ ।
 ਇਉਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਬਨਾਯੇ । ਸੁਨਿ ਸੂਤਿ ਸੰਤਨ ਚਿਤ ਸੁਖ
 ਪਾਯੇ ॥੬੩॥

Wahe means *Ashcharaj* (inexplicable/wondrous). *G(u)* means *Agyaan da Haneira* (darkness of ignorance). *Ru* means *Parkash* (light of wisdom). Therefore, *Waheguru* is the Inexplicable/Wondrous One; He who dispels the darkness of ignorance from the minds of devotees and lights them with wisdom 🌿





11



QUOTES ON GOD BY WORLD'S OUTSTANDING SCIENTISTS



"GOD EVIDENCE" INTRODUCTORY NOTE

For the past few decades there has been much noise about "Knowledge Explosion" in the modern world. As a SIKH—I may not be able to follow strictly the stringent prescriptions of what the devout believe to be certified symptoms of being one and as such being acceptable to the community without anybody raising eyebrows—I have understood the true meaning of the word *Sikh* [One who is an eternal learner and, while studiously avoiding the arrogance that acquisition of knowledge invariably brings along, cannot be satisfied by pep talks of the experts and the

specialists, especially the know-all scholars—and with insatiable inquisitiveness ask questions and find their answers for oneself].

I have kept alive my childhood curiosity to explore the world vis-à-vis its whys and wherefores, holistically. Therefore, more amused than irritated by the term "Knowledge Explosion" I launched an all-out 'Operation Search' three decades or more ago until I stumbled upon a study done by an American woman librarian. Her findings that must have upset many claimants confirmed my sceptical amusement head-on. According to her, she had tried to look at 5000 years of recorded history to figure out what we humans have done since its beginning to claim that our studiousness has

caused the “Knowledge Explosion”, and reported that only 17 percent of the so-called “Knowledge” is “original” and 83 percent “recycled”.


Though my philosophic outlook had been vindicated, I did not rest content until I discovered to my dismay that what the experts and specialists call “Knowledge” is actually “Information”. I am glad that good sense eventually prevailed and some sensible wit coined the phrase “Information Technology” [IT]. I went a step further and defined “Information” as humans’ need to *NAME* things, events, devices, materials, methods, products, processes, discoveries, and so forth to initiate and sustain sensible communication and interaction with fellow human beings. Reflecting now on my old discovery/invention I suddenly realise that the word “NAME” is so pregnant with meanings and connotations that its superfecundity has spread its countless progeny across the globe, so much so that the sacrosanct appellation that *Gurbani* uses for illimitable powers of Lord God has become the presiding deity of Technology which to superficial thinking strikes as an unwieldy body of inimical disciplines.

Having widened the scope of unending studentship, as noted before, I have been able to study the western and eastern philosophies, comparative religion, architecture, engineering, science and spirituality, among other things, and resolved the apparent opposition among

different fields of human endeavour, and succeeded in patiently cultivating what I call **Holistic Humanism**. Since the invention of this exciting new field, I have made it habit of mind to progressively widen the horizons of my perception of life encompassing all peoples inhabiting the globe. Inherent in this attainment is the all-important approach of both aesthetic appreciation and artistic creation made as one vehicle that invariably moves me from Whole to Parts seldom letting me go off-track. *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 the cell by evolution to the most complex forms of life and mind. The term ‘Holism’ was coined in the nineteenth century by the English General Smuts. He seems to have derived *holism* from the Greek word *holos*, meaning “whole”. Though this term has since found worldwide acceptance and usage few people know that it was coined by an army officer. At any rate, it reiterates my credo that any human being who keeps his mind wide open can stumble upon ideas that are available in nature and the Cosmos and have universal-timeless import and application.

When I started work on this book, I felt that many readers might find my writing of a kind that dwells on credulous romancing because I have drawn upon the incredibly fertile ground





of Religion which the so-called scientific-tempered would react to and dismiss as gobbledygook. Therefore, I tried to make my averments as logical as possible and, to reinforce my views, brought **Spirituality** face to face with **Science**—in a kind of shoot-at-sight encounter akin to the blood-curdling scene in movie “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”. In this world-famous Hollywood production the three master rogues were towards the end engaged in such a do-or-die conclusive encounter. However, thinking that rational minds accept things only when they have the unconditional support of well-established professionals in the field, I looked for relevant corroborative evidence. I was not only pleasantly surprised to discover more than 3,000 quotes by best minds in the field of Science but also felt encouraged to believe that, as Science forays into uncharted realms of the Universe to unravel its countless mysteries, the link between Science and Spirituality is emerging almost miraculously. From this vast repertoire, therefore, I have gleaned some for your consumption. Interestingly, the Internet information on the subject has been titled **“God Evidence”**.

Let me hope that you will read this material not only to clear your minds but also to open them to have wide-angle and telescopic view of the world we live in.

- **“A scientific discovery is also a religious discovery. There is no conflict between science and religion. Our knowledge of God is made larger with every discovery we make about the world.”**

–Joseph H. Taylor, Jr., who received the 1993 Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of the first known binary pulsar, and for his work which supported the Big Bang theory of the creation of the universe. Taylor is a devout Christian.

- **“The more I study science, the more I believe in God.”**

–Albert Einstein
(*The Wall Street Journal*, Dec 24, 1997, article by Jim Holt, “Science Resurrects God”)

- **“The question of whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the Universe has been answered in the affirmative by some of the highest intellects that have ever existed.”**

–Charles Darwin, the founder of evolutionary biology, as cited in his book *Descent of Man*

- **“As we conquer peak after peak we see in front of us regions full of interest and beauty, but we do not see our goal, we do not see the horizon; in the distance tower**

still higher peaks, which will yield to those who ascend them still wider prospects, and deepen the feeling, the truth of which is emphasized by every advance in science, that ‘Great are the Works of the Lord’.”

—Sir Joseph J. Thomson, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist who is recognized as the founder of atomic physics. Thomson was a devout Christian.

(In Presidential Address to the British Association, as quoted in Arthur L. Foley, ‘Recent Developments in Physical Science, *The Popular Science Monthly* (1910), 456)

- “God [is] the author of the universe, and the free establisher of the laws of motion.”
—Physicist and chemist Robert Boyle, who is considered to be the founder of modern chemistry. Boyle was a devout Christian.

- “One way to learn the mind of the Creator is to study His creation. We must pay God the compliment of studying His work of art and this should apply to all realms of human thought. A refusal to use our intelligence honestly is an act of contempt for Him who gave us that intelligence.”

—Physicist Ernest Walton, who won the 1951 Nobel Prize in Physics for his “atom smashing” experiments done at Cambridge University in

the early 1930s, and so became the first person in history to artificially split the atom. Walton was a devout Christian.

(V. J. McBrierty (2003): *Ernest Thomas Sinton Walton, The Irish Scientist, 1903-1995*, Trinity College Dublin Press.)

- “Astronomers who do not draw theistic or deistic conclusions are becoming rare, and even the few dissenters hint that the tide is against them. Geoffrey Burbidge, of the University of California at San Diego, complains that his fellow astronomers are rushing off to join ‘the First Church of Christ of the Big Bang.’”

—Astrophysicist Hugh Ross, former post-doctoral fellow at the California Institute of Technology and author of *The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Latest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*.

- “The fanatical atheists are like slaves who are still feeling the weight of their chains which they have thrown off after hard struggle. They are creatures who – in their grudge against traditional religion as the ‘opium of the masses’ – cannot hear the music of the spheres.”

—Albert Einstein



- “I believe that the more thoroughly science is studied, the further does it take us from anything comparable to atheism.”
- “If you study science deep enough and long enough, it will force you to believe in God.”

—Lord William Kelvin, who was noted for his theoretical work on thermodynamics, the concept of absolute zero and the Kelvin temperature scale based upon it. Kelvin was a devout Christian.

- “There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other. Every serious and reflective person realizes, I think, that the religious element in his nature must be recognized and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect balance and harmony. And indeed it was not by accident that the greatest thinkers of all ages were deeply religious souls.”

—Max Planck, the Nobel Prize winning physicist who made the crucial scientific contribution of founding quantum physics.

Planck was a devout Christian and a member of the Lutheran Church in Germany.

Religion and Natural Science (Lecture Given 1937) *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*, trans. F. Gaynor (New York, 1949), pp. 184.

- “Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection in various forms. He appeared to Mary Magdalene so that they might take him for a gardener. Very ingeniously these manifestations of Jesus are to our minds difficult to penetrate. (He appears) as a gardener. The gardener plants seedlings in prepared soil. The soil must exert a physical and chemical influence so that the seed of the plant can grow. Yet this is not sufficient. The warmth and light of the sun must be added, together with rain, in order that growth may result. The seed of supernatural life, of sanctifying grace, cleanses from sin, so preparing the soul of man, and man must seek to preserve this life by his good works. He still needs the supernatural food, the body of the Lord, which received continually, develops and brings to completion of the life. So natural and supernatural must unite to the realization of the holiness to the people. Man must contribute his minimum work of toil, and God gives the growth. Truly, the seed, the talent, the grace of God is there, and man has simply to work, take the seeds to bring them to the bankers. So that we “*may have life, and abundantly*”.

—Gregor Mendel, who is regarded as “the father of modern genetics”, partly due to his

pioneering work on plant hybridization. Mendel was also an Augustinian friar (Catholic priest). The above is an excerpt from an Easter sermon which he delivered.

- “I have looked into most philosophical systems and I have seen that none will work without God.”
- “Science is incompetent to reason upon the creation of matter itself out of nothing. We have reached the utmost limit of our thinking faculties when we have admitted that because matter cannot be eternal and self-existent it must have been created.”
—Physicist and mathematician James Clerk Maxwell, who is credited with formulating classical electromagnetic theory, and whose contributions to science are considered to be of the same magnitude to those of Einstein and Newton. Maxwell was a devout Christian.
- “For myself, faith begins with a realization that a supreme intelligence brought the universe into being and created man. It is not difficult for me to have this faith, for it is incontrovertible that where there is a plan there is intelligence—an orderly, unfolding universe testifies to the truth of the most majestic statement ever uttered—‘In the beginning God.’”

- “Science can have no quarrel with a religion which postulates a God to whom men are His children.”

—Arthur Compton, winner of the 1927 Nobel Prize in Physics for his discovery of the Compton Effect.

- “Those who say that the study of science makes a man an atheist must be rather silly.”


- “Something which is against natural laws seems to me rather out of the question because it would be a depressive idea about God. It would make God smaller than he must be assumed. When he stated that these laws hold, then they hold, and he wouldn’t make exceptions. This is too human an idea. Humans do such things, but not God.”

—Nobel Prize winning physicist Max Born, who was instrumental in the development of quantum mechanics.

- “God is a mathematician of a very high order and He used advanced mathematics in constructing the universe.”

—Nobel Prize winning physicist Paul A. M. Dirac, who made crucial early contributions to both quantum mechanics and quantum electrodynamics.



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- “The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you.”
 - “In the history of science, ever since the famous trial of Galileo, it has repeatedly been claimed that scientific truth cannot be reconciled with the religious interpretation of the world. Although I am now convinced that scientific truth is unassailable in its own field, I have never found it possible to dismiss the content of religious thinking as simply part of an outmoded phase in the consciousness of mankind, a part we shall have to give up from now on. Thus in the course of my life I have repeatedly been compelled to ponder on the relationship of these two regions of thought, for I have never been able to doubt the reality of that to which they point.”

—Werner Heisenberg, who was awarded the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics for the creation of quantum mechanics (which is absolutely crucial to modern science). Heisenberg was a Lutheran Christian, publishing and giving several talks reconciling science with his faith. He was a member of Germany’s largest Protestant religious body, the Evangelische Kirche.

- “The ghostly presence of virtual particles defies rational common sense and is non-intuitive for those unacquainted with physics. Religious belief in God, and Christian belief that God became Man around two thousand years ago, may seem strange to common-sense thinking. But when the most elementary physical things behave in this way, we should be prepared to accept that the deepest aspects of our existence go beyond our common-sense intuitions.”

—Nobel Prize winning physicist Tony Hewish as quoted in the foreword to John Polkinghorne and Nicholas Beale’s book *Questions of Truth: Fifty-one Responses to Questions about God, Science, and Belief*.

- “The best data we have (concerning the Big Bang) are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, the Bible as a whole.”
- “If there are a bunch of fruit trees, one can say that whoever created these fruit trees wanted some apples. In other words, by looking at the order in the world, we can infer purpose and from purpose we begin to get some knowledge of the Creator, the

Planner of all this. This is, then, how I look at God. I look at God through the works of God's hands and from those works imply intentions. From these intentions, I receive an impression of the Almighty."

—Arno Penzias, the 1978 Nobel Prize recipient in physics as cited in New York Times on March 12, 1978 (first quote) and '*The God I Believe in*', Joshua O. Haberman – editor, New York, Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994, 184. (second quote).

- "To know the mighty works of God, to comprehend His wisdom and majesty and power; to appreciate, in degree, the wonderful workings of His laws, surely all this must be a pleasing and acceptable mode of worship to the Most High, to whom ignorance cannot be more grateful than knowledge."

—Nicolaus Copernicus, the mathematician and astronomer (1473-1543) who formulated a heliocentric model of the universe, as cited in *The Language of God* by Francis Collins. ("Heliocentric" places the sun, rather than the Earth, at the center of the universe).

- "There are many ways in which people are made aware of their power to believe in the supremacy of Divine guidance and power: through music or visual art, some event or experience decisively influencing

their life, looking through a microscope or telescope, or just by looking at the miraculous manifestations or purposefulness of Nature."

—Sir Ernst Chain, winner of the the 1945 Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology "for the discovery of penicillin and its curative effect in various infectious diseases."

- "The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator. Science brings men nearer to God."

- "In good philosophy, the word cause ought to be reserved to the single Divine impulse that has formed the universe."

- "Little science takes you away from God but more of it takes you to Him."

—Louis Pasteur, the founder of microbiology and immunology. Pasteur was a devout Christian.

- "My greatest discovery was that I needed God, and that I was nothing without him and that he loved me and showed his love by sending Jesus to save me."

—Alexander Fleming, the Nobel Prize-winning British bacteriologist who discovered the life-saving antibiotic penicillin. Fleming was a devout Christian 🌿






12



EPILOGUE



Greatest Prophet of the World Guru Nanak Dev possesses some fundamental distinctions in his active concern for the amelioration of the human condition worldwide and his lifelong personal struggle to achieve that humane aim through inspiring personal example encompassing family life, social responsibilities, economic exigencies, and political ideologies—all rolled into one holistic package that I call Pragmatic Spirituality. Unlike other Leaders of World Religions who experienced and enjoyed the ecstasy of the Lord's communion in closed-eye private contemplation, Founder of the Sikh Faith, kept his all-inclusive compassion in open-eyed outreach for all peoples inhabiting the globe despite the divine euphoria of his unbroken “*Naam Khumari*”. He turned the extended psycho-spiritual exercise into the people's common aims, collaborative enterprise, corporate wealth, and congregational worship.

As Timeless-Universal Guidelines for generations on end not only did he write down his divine utterances in his own hand but also collected the *Bani* of 15 *Bhagats* [Lord God's committed devotees] which stands enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*—thanks to the Fifth Master Guru Arjan Dev's unparalleled genius in tandem with incredible far- and fore-sight. The fact that the *Bhagats* featured in the Holy Book of Sikh Faith were located in different parts of the country this was an uphill task. Guru Nanak's efforts bore fruit because he had in a state of *Sahj* [Unconditioned Spontaneity] drawn up a Master Plan with minute details of well-timed socially-beneficent activities. He grasped the import that his divinely assigned job was not confined to spreading the Light of NAAM everywhere but was ordained to show to prospective beneficiaries by personal example how to lead wholesome lives

steeped in Holistic Humanism. Thus when he declared Bhai Lehna to be his most worthy successor he handed over to him as “*Gur-Parsad*” [God’s Sacred Sacrament] his conscientiously collected treasure along with his own Bani. He named Bhai Lehna “Angad” [Flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; and soul of my soul] not merely as a christening ceremony—but also to demonstrate how thenceforth his spirit would pass on to his subsequent successors so that his divinely assigned mission could be consummated in every sense of the word during the lifetime of the Tenth and Last Master Guru Gobind Singh.

The other Herculean task that Guru Nanak accomplished was to gather together many Forms of the Creator-Primal Person [*Karta Purkh*] into One Godhead [*Ik Oankar*] so that *Maya*-scattered Human Consciousness could regain its focus *via Shabda-Guru* [with *NAAM* as the Perennial *Mantra*] to connect itself back with *The Source*. Imagine the mind-boggling number of 330-million-strong Pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses. More than anything else, it had been misleading India’s vast populace to the rituals-loaded worship of many different deities even within the same families. With the scriptures’ sanction [*Sanatana Dharma*] this psycho-social malaise performed the Herculean job of reinforcing the perverted dictates of *Manusmriti* that cleverly succeeded in dividing

Hindu society on the basis of the notorious four-tiered Caste System. Since the prevalent multi-deities religious mosaic of his times had an unquestioned religious support nobody could openly object to it for fear of ostracism. It was, therefore, left to Guru Nanak to take up that stupendous job with titanic temerity and clean the Aegean stables of moral degeneration, social discrimination, and religious marshes. He diagnosed the epidemic problem to its fundamentals and made his historic achievement in the forthright pronouncement of a New Faith that could be easily grasped by the lay and the learned alike and practised with a sense of belonging to the entire Humankind as God’s priceless gift.

One Master is my Lord
O Siblings of Destiny
He is the One
And Only ONE
One Master is my Lord
[Creator-Provider-Destroyer]



It is not difficult to comprehend and appreciate that all the chronic ills of society worldwide have sprung from genetic fear and its



inappropriate remedy sought in competition that far from letting you rest awhile in order to reflect on the need to embark upon your inward journey quickens your pace on slippery ground out into the World of Matter in which cut-throat rivalry of the Business of Living makes you a fit case for the psychiatrist's couch. Do what you will and then pay the heavy fees that the moral and spiritual gurus charge but peace of mind eludes you from here to the grave or the cremation ground. Inherent in your madness is utter ignorance of the meaning of 'comparison' that you inordinately use to pronounce judgement on fellow beings' doings or misdoings by overlooking your own. The word 'comparison' is derived from the Latin root: *comparāre*, to match, from *com-*, *parāre*, to make or esteem equal—*par*, *equal*.

Since no two humans can ever be exactly alike, it stands to reason to believe that the adage "Comparisons are odious" is perfectly right and justified. However, what the strategy of clever folks who drag you into the battlefield does achieve is the sordid fact of making comparisons routine and raving—even indispensable, and they succeed in diverting your attention from discovering the untraced treasures that lie within your being to the evanescent joys of the outside world of Materialism. The so-called Objective World is overpopulated with countless

heart-beguiling commodities [*inanimate*] that are strewn around promising well-established well being. However, the happiness you crave never quite comes because objects are *dead* things and cannot fulfil your 'subjective' [*animate*] aspirations which are desperately on the lookout for something perennially alive and kicking. My quandary is that despite wide-spread sloganeering that we humans have made awesome advancement in all fields we are yet so illiterate as not to grasp the subterfuge that despite high-decibel marketing noises commodities [*dead*] can never tranquillise the soul's burning lust for lasting peace [*life*]. How can you extinguish raging fire by adding more and more fuel to it?

The crazily sought-after happiness in the outer [objective] world forever eludes us because happiness is 'subjective' and lies within your cranium cavity with *The Source* installed there by Lord God behind the hardest Tenth Door. We are unhappy because we are separated from Our Father and His Home. As creatures created by Him and sent to the world we are PARTS, tiny sparks, of Lord God who alone is WHOLE and dwells as Divine Effulgence. Therefore, unless we find our way back home and walk the inordinately long distance of endless cycles of birth, death, and rebirth we would never have peace of mind. The secret is that God in spite of His enormous and unceasing activities as Creator, Provider, and

Destroyer is perfectly at rest and thus in a state of imperturbable eternal Bliss. On the contrary, we humans are perpetually tossed about by blind ambition and thus restless and desperate despite the Psychiatrist's counselling and the Jogi's psychosomatic workouts. We seek happiness which lies in WHOLENESS and, therefore, complete imperturbable acquiescence that never quite comes from a world a-twirl in unending change and mind-boggling transformation stays with us as soul-gnawing companion birth after birth *ad infinitum*.


Many scholars use the word 'Perfect' to discuss the problem of our inability to live in peace despite incredible technological advancements. This word means "complete and correct in every way; of the best possible type or without fault; and exactly right for someone or something". Look at it vis-à-vis the word "Wholeness" that means "an undivided or unbroken completeness or totality with nothing wanting". To my mind, the word 'perfect' is not *right* because our bodies and their limbs have been made perfect otherwise they would not fit into the jigsaw puzzle that Life is, and work efficiently the way they do to sustain it in good shape from birth to death in the way they do. Therefore, the word 'Whole' fits the bill 'perfectly' well, and *Gurbani* substantiates this view time and again from the very beginning to the end, countless number of times.

The Numeral "1" with which *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* begins says it all with utmost succinctness and without any ambiguity at all. Used by Guru Nanak Dev for "Oankar" [Lord God] it stresses His Unicity and His Indivisibility. By this token, all Creatures created by Him are 'Parts' of His 'Whole' and unless they merge in Divine Essence they cannot recover their 'wholeness'. Therefore, the Eternal Bliss which is an attribute of Lord God shall continue to elude them through the cycle of countless births, deaths, and rebirths. That is why the *Gurus* have used the word "Poora Prabh" [Whole God] because His *Simran*, which is constant remembrance, would slowly and steadily help us in gathering our scattered consciousness in the direction of moving towards "Wholeness".

In my view, bearing this crucial fact in mind should help all seekers of Truth to accept [not merely appreciate] the indispensability of *Gurbani* for guiding our wayward and vagabond souls back to *The Source*. Guru Nanak has stated the purpose of Life [indeed, the entire cosmos] thus: *Everyone and everything is constantly on the go because their journey began in Lord God and will end in fulfilment of the divine purpose [Being] through aeons of change and evolution [Becoming]*.

Finally, I have no better way of closing this Epilogue than to quote the last paragraphs from





the Conclusion of Vas Dev's thesis for which he had earned his PhD in 1991 from the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University, in Chandigarh. He was working on the clerical staff of the Punjab Government Secretariat when he accomplished this awesome task. Having read widely and reflected deeply on the subject since early-1980s, which has been brilliantly dilated upon by scholars of different genres, I have no hesitation in asserting that Vas Dev's work is yet unsurpassed in terms of its authenticity, integrity of intention, an impossible wedding of the spiritual with the scientific, profundity of scholarship, lucidity of expression of esoteric ideas and concepts; above all, putting everything in the broader perspective of Comparative Religion [Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam] without fear or favour.

VAS DEV WRITES:

“Guru Nanak has narrated the story of the cosmos from its pre-creation to dissolution state in a unique manner. The universal truths enshrined in his Bani are truly scientific. A few of them are given below:-

- a) Matter is inanimate in nature; it changes its form and not nature;
- b) Like produces like;
- c) Like merges in like;
- d) Journey of energy from subtle to gross state and vice versa;
- e) Expansion is followed by contraction;
- f) Concept of cause and effect; and
- g) Which is born is destined to perish.

He also states that like everything else, the universe too has its creator – the Lord, who Himself is self-existent. He is the creative and directive power. He is the cause of causes. He is the life of all life in the universe. He not only creates the universe but sustains and dissolves (it) also. The universe emerges from Him and in the end merges in Him. Time and again, he repeats this process. Everything in the universe is under His command.

The cosmos is nothing but His manifestation. He Himself is the air, water, fire, moon, sun, male, female, etc.

He pervades the entire creation. There is the same inner consciousness amongst all the beings.

All the living beings from the micro-organisms to that of elephants wander from one existence to another according to their deeds till they merge in the Lord.

From the above ideas of Guru Nanak, we may conclude that his approach to life (living things) is not speculative at all but he has studied the nature of the universe and life therein, in a critical and scientific manner. Nanak Bani could, therefore, be one of the most important guiding factors for the seekers of the knowledge of the universe and life in the cosmos.

To conclude, the COSMIC VIEW OF LIFE which Guru Nanak presents in his Bani is summed up as under:-

“All the living things in the universe are related to each other.

They are like beads of a rosary.

Substantially, One is All and All are One.””






13



SONNETS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE



Included in this Section are my 41 Sonnets written on the inspiration of my lifelong study of *Gurbani*. This divine task of studying the Guru's Word was assigned by my father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti when I was a schoolboy. I have since continued my forays into the Holy Book of the Sikh Faith reverently called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. With each step that smacked of success I have been experiencing mounting inquisitiveness and ever-deepening contentment in the realm of psycho-spiritual adventures. One undiminished gain that has accrued from this passionate pursuit, far removed from Architecture in which I was formally trained to earn my livelihood, is that it has awakened my innate creativity and both sustained and replenished it through all phases of my life bolstering my joyous wonder at the immensity of the creation and creatures—and their unseen

Creator, Lord God: *Mysterious whose ways, indeed, are.*

I do hope that this supporting material produced through years of my unrelenting quest will enable you to grasp the meaning, magnificence, and munificence of the Sacred Word [*Shabda Guru*] subsumed in *Naam*, the Holy Name. Guru Nanak has used *Naam* generously in his 974 *Shabads* [Hymns] to communicate the Timeless-Universal Message that his Revelation has brought along from *The Source*.

This material should stand you in good stead in understanding *my* interpretation of *Gurbani* to aid *your* own exegesis of it, eventually. This selection is drawn from my anthology of 275 sonnets titled "*Songs of the Soul*" that was published by RoseDog Books, USA, in 2010. It is the largest collection of poems of this genre [14-line verses] written and published by any poet in the world.

**A YOGI IS THE ONE WHO'S JOINED WITH GOD
AND HIS CREATION**

A *Yogi* is the one who's joined with God and His creation
 A *Bhogi* is the one who's scattered and wasteful of Life
 A *Yogi* is not affected by the changing world's variation
 A *Bhogi* continues to dissipate his energy in petty strife
 A true *Yogi* is the product of *Surta-Shabda* work-out
 That he does everyday single-mindedly with religious zeal
 It softens the Heart's obduracy and makes the Body stout
 That the *Yogi* may serve the cause of people's common weal
 A *Yogi* seeks to vanquish his five inner foes
 By invoking God's grace in his spiritual enterprise
 Mere *Asanas* won't suffice this he surely knows
 At each failure, along the line, his Heart sorely cries
 Alas! Charlatans called the "spiritual *Gurus*" belie this truth
 They sell packaged exercises, misleading age and youth

**AIR IS THE PRECEPTOR WHICH HELPS
MAKE *THAT* SOUND**

Air is the Preceptor which helps make *that* Sound
 Striking which against the navel opens out the knot
 This exercise is spiritual tilling of the ground
 It leads to the killing of the Mind on the spot
 This knot opens on its own to cause Body's death
 It must be opened by *Shabda* ere death takes place
 For, this knot at the navel contains Life's last breath
 From whose *pre-mortem* release the Soul proceeds a-pace
 To effect ultimate merger with the Light Divine
 To attain to the state of merger with Life Eternal
 In which all emerges to be God's, sans 'me' and 'mine'
 For, the mortal shell is broken to arrive at the kernel
 With *clinical* death, the Soul is forced to be born again
 By *psychic* death, to Life Eternal it ought to attain

**AN EMBODIED SOUL SURELY BECOMES
A LESSER GOD**

An embodied Soul surely becomes a lesser God
 Because it must function within the Body's limits
 To realise its true 'self' against many an odd
 By collecting a broken Mind's countless bits
 Scattered pieces make up a giant kaleidoscope
 It allures the Mind into worldly amusements
 By gradual self-blinding, it loses all hope
 Of rising above the clouds of scenes 'n' scents
 In a state of dissipation, Mind's hunger increases
 Giddily tumbling from piece to piece of mirror
 While greed's on the rise, Man's Life decreases
 He loses focus due to impending Death's horror
 Soul resumes its infinity within the finite Body
 When Mind stops chasing shadows 'n' the shady

**ATTENTION, BY ITS NATURE, MOVES
DOWNWARDS, AND OUT**

Attention, by its nature, moves downwards, and out
 It requires a Herculean effort to move upwards, inside
 Life of Righteousness begins in a complete turn-about
 Leading Attention to where God Himself does abide
 Centred in Vanity is the entire world's journey
 Centred in Divinity is Man's spiritual endeavour
 Vanity goes out through the nine doors on a tourney
 Seeking fulfilment of Greed and Lust forever
 The tenth hidden door opens when focused
 Attention hits it
 It's an uphill task requiring rigorous spiritual endeavour
 Which kick-starts when disillusionment befits it
 But when would that Door open? God alone knows
 The effort is sustained when inner hunger grows



**BELIEF IS WHEN SOMEONE ELSE DOES
ALL THE THINKING**

Belief is when someone else does all the thinking
Faith is when you are in control of your senses
Belief isn't yours it can't save you from drowning
Faith makes Time whole by combining three tenses
Faith, by its artistry, creates Time-Space continuum
To enable the Mind to see Truth in a fitful flash
Living Life to the core in its *summum bonum*
Steadily resolving all opposites and their clash
Faith is awakened awareness of God's existence
Unwavering through Life's trials and tribulations
Belief is picked up to gain social acceptance
It's a chameleon changing with trade manipulations
Faith is a decree for the Path of Righteousness
Belief is vagabondage of the Mind in distress

BY EMBRACING THE WORLD IS GOD FORGOTTEN

By embracing the World is God forgotten
By surrendering to Him it becomes His family
Mind is perennially fresh, then, never rotten
Everything is crystal clear sans any anomaly
God's home in this World is the human heart
His in-dwelling spirit dispels Mind's darkness
Then, Man, as a householder, plays well his part
In the lush exuberance of ascetic starkness
A Householder secures his foothold in Divinity
Mystic absorption in God shows him the way
And Man's finitude assumes a stature of Infinity
Fearless of loss 'n' gain he never goes astray
God-*simran* is God-love; and God-love, Reality
A pauper becomes a King through Divine fealty

**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

**CREATIVITY IS THE MOST AUTHENTIC
SELF-EXPRESSION**

Creativity is the most authentic Self-Expression
It springs from within as its need becomes want
Afflatus leads the Psyche into the Act of Creation
When human yearnings for Identity begin to haunt
Yearnings raise the temperature of psychic powers
An inner fever thus quickly builds to high pitch
Raving rumbles occur in Mind's inmost bowers
And make even the poor feel immensely rich
Some germ of an idea from this lava flows
To be frozen as a metaphor or some image
The Artist-in-Man thence not even knows
Whether it will be his loss or to his advantage
Creativity is the only evidence that God is the Creator
He creates Art when He becomes Mind's Terminator

EACH CELL IN MY BODY IS A LIVING CREATION

Each cell in my Body is a living creation
 Sixty billion cells make a single physique
 That number is ten times the world population
 Of which every human is totally unique
 No two individuals are exactly each other
 Different are their complexion, features, build
 Even twins don't resemble born of the same mother
 While Life plays its amazing role as God has willed
 Human Creativity is derived from God's own genius
 But the Body has imposed a limit on its blossom
 In Nature layers of Mystery underlie the obvious
 And make the Scheme of Things entirely awesome
 To hail God, the Creator, requires a joyous wonder
 His voice can then be heard as a soundless thunder

THE EGO IS RIGHT: FREE WILL EXISTS AND OPERATES

All saints and scoundrels are affected equally
 By the same operative laws of the universe
 Call them by any name—Fate, *Kismet*, Destiny—
 They continue operating for better or worse.
 The body is destined to act as it acts
 And experiences joys and sorrows accordingly
 Man is baffled by the jolts that he so gets
 As he is carried along on his mortal journey
 Helpless! He's willing to accept it, but Ego reiterates:
 If all this is Destiny's doing, what am "I"?
 The Ego is right: Free Will exists and operates
 But to goad 'n' guide man on the path of Spirituality.
 And Spirit's flight is self-monitored, as it avers:
 Fortitude for myself, and Compassion for others

EGO IS THE HARDEST THING, INDEED, TO RENOUNCE


Ego is the hardest thing, indeed, to renounce
 It has two forms: the gross 'n' the subtle
 Man uses his tongue for the first to announce
 The second is Mind's doing, hard to rebuttal
 Ego is Body-Consciousness that makes Man think
 Of self-importance as assertion of his identity
 Least realising that with it he would himself sink
 For, the Body's perishable, and has limited sanctity
 Strange though it may sound yet it's really true
 Only virtues form the ground on which Ego rests
 And builds a great citadel impervious to the sense
 Thus much of his energy Man in vain invests
 To the realm of Truth though he can't move thence
 With Ego in place Man is a monument of Vanity
 Mind cleansed of Ego is the House of Divinity

ETHICS, AESTHETICS, LOGIC, AND METAPHYSICS

Ethics, Aesthetics, Logic, and Metaphysics
 Are branches of the same field: Philosophy
 To these may be added the fifth one: Politics
 Together they reflect on the values of Humanity
 Ethics is the Science of Morality; Aesthetics, of Beauty
 Metaphysics thinks things to their ultimate significance
 Politics orders relations between State and the Society
 Logic deals with correct reasoning, in common parlance
 The making of Culture and its practice are secular
 To profess and propagate one's Faith is religious
 Understanding these reveals something spectacular
 What we humans make lands us in unseemly mess
 All Knowledge is worthless if we practise it by rote
 And remain uncivilised, cutting each other's throat



EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD IS A
MEANS TO AN END



Everything in the world is a means to an end.
And there are no exceptions to this cosmic rule.
Neither mighty nor the meek can this rule bend;
It applies equally to the wise and the fool.
The food we eat is a means to our health,
The exercise fulfils this aim in many forms;
All hard work is a means to acquiring wealth:
Good manners are how we respect social norms.
Even love is a means to the end of integrity.
Prayer is Man's way of accessing Lord God.
When means become ends, one acts with audacity;
One errs, goes astray, and does everything odd.
Wisdom is a means to distinguishing the two
As different, to maintain sanity between me and you!

GOD CAN NEVER BE LOST; THEREFORE,
YOUR SEEKING HIM

God can never be lost; therefore, your seeking Him
Is a wrong metaphor, unworthy of the basic Truth
It's like forgetting something in your own home
For, you're absent-minded, and memory is uncouth
God has created the World with His own material
By His own conception, method, and technology
He is the King of kings, the One True Imperial
Above the ken of *yoga*, philosophy, and psychology
He's nearer than your breath; in Him you've life
Listening to the *mantra* the Mind stops chattering
Surta-shabda yoga ends all the worldly strife
Countless lusty desires close up their bothering
Then, in a fitful flash of realisation, all too suddenly
God fills your receiving heart with His Light Heavenly

GOD IS DIVINE LIGHT; GURU'S SHABDA,
THE WORD

God is Divine Light, *Guru's Shabda*: The Word
The Creator, His Light, through Virtues spreads
Sun is the Life-Giver for man, animal, bird
Sun's power is awesome that Darkness dreads
Sun spreads its light through countless rays
Nobody can deny the Sun but certainly ignore
Working as virtues, Mysterious are God's ways
Remembering, He *is*; forgetting, no more
Reality is what the Mind accepts as its own
This fact is the Principle of all Human Bondage
You don't need rituals to remember your son
Remembering God thus is the hardest to manage
So long as Man treats God as a curious stranger
Forever he keeps stumbling into many a danger

G-O-D IS GENERATOR, OPERATOR,
AND DESTROYER

G-O-D is Generator, Operator, and Destroyer
Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent
Of His divine sport the sole Player-Enjoyer
Whatever He does is for this purpose meant
Birth and Death belong to the selfsame game
Spanning the two is Life: souls' playfield
God's creatures are known by many a name
Happiness and sorrow are their own actions' yield
For each soul a unique body has He made
God's breath connects the two into Life
Each one's actions are in their own coin paid
While He keeps Unity with Diversity rife
Master of His Will, God commands by His edict-fiat
To know this secret Man must strive to become it

**GOD IS IN ETERNAL DIALOGUE WITH
ALL HIS CREATION**

God is in eternal dialogue with all His creation
He listens constantly while He talks to Man
Man wanders from Righteousness in his deviation
His Mind chattering: I have got this, and I can
God speaks to Man in such a subtle voice
That pin-drop silence is required to hear it
Man must give God an audience sans choice
Stillness causes pain but he's got to bear it
Mind must inside all consciousness withdraw
For, restless desires cause all the heady noise
Man must be drowning to catch at such a straw
Until he has regained his prenatal equipoise
Soul's talk with God washes all the mortal sins
Man engrossed in Word thus a losing battle wins

**GOD-REMEMBRANCE MUST STEADILY
TURN INTO A CHANT**

God-remembrance must steadily turn into a chant
And show all its effect in manifested Humility
Until the Mind is seized by a renunciatory haunt
Urging the Soul to pray for thanksgiving of Divinity
The fifth stage is the realm of ever-growing Bliss
Where Soul-Consciousness loves to dwell forever
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, and to lift consciousness higher
Thence God's grace wafts the Soul aft a Giant Thaw
To move it upward into Truth's inmost bower
Such a miracle happens in the rarest of rare cases
Those so blessed redeem others, with glowing faces

**GOD'S ONE WORD CAUSED THE 'BIG BANG'
IN A PALL OF FOG**

God's one Word caused the 'Big Bang' in a pall of fog
From which sprang instantly a giant ball of fire
The process studiously extended to go the whole hog
To create countless suns—with the universe entire
From the heated fog rains fell for millions of years
Till sun's offshoot cooled to form the Mother Earth
Life's journey began in stone that wore and still wears
To become the soil for many plants to take birth
Plants in aeons of Time became the Animal Kingdom
Whose reckless existence thro' hunting, killing, mating
Made ground for Man to appear with a burning bosom
He's plunged into a hunger which knows no sating
He is possessed by sex, sleep, hunger, self-assertion
Craving fulfilment forever through many a perversion

**IN COMMITTING AN EVIL DEED, MAN'S
MIND IS FOCUSED**

In committing an evil deed, Man's Mind is focused
He's fully alert, and pays attention to each detail
Fear of being caught makes him feel nonplussed
It doesn't let his train of thoughts ever derail
Meditation and prayers involve no such risk
Thus every thought wanders like a prodigal son
Covering incredible territories at a speed brisk
While the task-on-hand remains totally undone
Church-going or telling the beads doesn't make *dharma*
Yet such a hollow ritual becomes a respectable *karma*
And the charlatans are regarded as ethically decent
The Religion of God's-Name is an awesome mission
Requiring an alert 'n' focused Mind in total submission



LORD GOD'S GRACE IS LIKE A PERENNIAL RAINFALL

Lord God's grace is like a perennial rainfall
That keeps pouring everywhere, all the time
It makes no distinction between big and small
And performs its function above creed 'n' clime
The amount received depends on one's own capacity
Which can't be with someone else's compared
The Providence operates by Divine veracity
This secret to the Saint's Mind is unseen bared
Man remains poor due to his own silly choice
When he invokes the benefit, not the Benefactor
The cacophony of desires drowns that voice
This would in prayer be otherwise a lifter
God has created everything in super-abundance
Blinded by Greed, Man sees not His beneficence

MEDITATION IS A STATE OF CONSTANT VIGIL

Meditation is a state of constant vigil
Variously thro' thought, word, deed, and the rest
Unlike focus-on-the-navel, a task uphill—
An all-inclusive awareness, a choiceless test
Of oneself as a man as one truly is
Rather than as one was or still might be
Awesome spectre that dislodges bliss
Ruthless encounter with one's own psyche
Agonising awareness of those infirmities—
Which are man's very own, without the asking—
Facing which, he may rise o'er all frivolities,
And delight in the powers which are his too in the unmasking
Ah, but sheer raw courage is required for such encounter—
No wonder it's easier to be a *yogi* than a householder!

MIND'S TWO DISEASES ARE OF MAN'S OWN MAKING

Mind's two diseases are of Man's own making
Distress and Anxiety are not Divine gifts
In deep slumber the Mind is far from waking
Wandering in dreams, it rakes and it sifts
Groping in the Dark leads to recurrent stumbles
The injuries sustained are the cause of pain
Unaware that the sounds are his own rumbles
By blaming others he seeks their riddance in vain
Mind's diseases spring from Man's own Ignorance
Their cure is the Light that only Knowledge brings
By creating within himself a Spiritual ambience
From which a healthy Wholeness normally springs
Pained, he seeks Knowledge that comes from within
By God's grace so equipped Man resolves not to sin

**MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE CAN BE UNKNIT,
BUT NOT GOD'S SECRETS**

Mysteries of the universe can be unknit, but not God's secrets
Science accomplishes the former task with manmade tools
But a Scientist attempting the latter has eventual regrets
From the failure of Theories, and bankruptcy of Schools
The knowable cannot remain a secret to the Mind for long
Though as soon as it becomes known it loses all charm
Such knowledge is limited to the facts of right and wrong
And the good it carries also embodies a sure harm
Dharma makes the Mind a-thirst for the Knowledge of God
In which each step of knowing makes ever-increasing Bliss
By it is fuelled one's search against Life's many an odd
For, one's convinced by experience: there's nothing like this
But his inability to grasp God's secrets makes Man wonder
As his Bliss deepens evermore in joyous self-surrender

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

NATURE IS GOD'S AWESOME, MANIFEST MIGHT

Nature is God's awesome, manifest Might
Nature abhors vacuum, so it's often said
Mind cannot be voided except with Light
That dwells in there when thoughts are dead
Thoughts are Mind's children, which it loves
They are: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride
Of Psycho-Emotional materials are they all made
The Scientist and the Cynic are prone to deride
For, they lack the guts "to call a spade a spade"
Meditation is *not* concentration of the Mind
It is *Surta-Shabda Sadhna*, done to the hilt
To lift up Consciousness above worldly grind
For ensuring that Soul doesn't in Passions wilt
When the Mind is emptied with merger of the Two
God occupies the Space vacated by "yours-'n'-you"

ONLY A SAINT'S VOICE REACHES THE DOOR OF GOD'S COURT

Only a Saint's voice reaches the door of God's court
A Sinner's noisy outbursts are confined to his home
Or they reach the neighbours, or, farther, scandals' mart
They lack the strength; they don't from deep within come
Ego's assurance against insecurity is an illusion
It's a vain cover-up for the huge hollowness within
The more it grows the more it defies Divine intrusion
Its journey to Eternity may thus never begin
"I am" blows up to blind it to "He is" reality
Ego cannot accept anyone greater though God it be
Self-aggrandisement is its sordid quality
By virtue of which, though it has eyes, it can't see
Replacing "I am" by "You are" as a spiritual chant
Exalts Man well above every worldly want

PRAYER POLLUTED BY WANTS BECOMES CRASS BUSINESS

Prayer polluted by wants becomes crass business
Restless, it goes to all Places of Worship
Which like Malls sell everything save happiness
But carnal appetite they certainly whip
Unless the Subtle Body awakens ere mortal death
The business of wants continues unimpeded
In that case when the Body breathes its last breath
The Mind in its subtle stature gets receded
Taking a cue from wants it looks for a new birth
In the vain bid to find its ultimate release
Alas! It could never by that method find its worth
And merge with Divine Light with relative ease
Only *Surta-Shabda Sadhna* could release the Soul
From the tangled mesh of Body's worldly role



REMEMBERING GOD TO SERVE IS
THE MEASURE OF WORTH

Remembering God to serve is the measure of worth
As only God-remembrance can purify the heart
Man's sole purpose of coming onto the Planet Earth
Lies in serving Humanity to play his assigned part
You don't have to remember God for God's sake
For, He doesn't thrive on your remembrance
God-remembrance will the sleeping Mind awake
To make it fit to receive His beneficence
The rough sea of *Maya* is impossible to cross
The only safe vehicle is the ship of God's Name
It keeps the Mind afloat in the storms of loss
While the way is shown by His love's flame
When Creative Mysticism prepares the Mind
To God's Divine Light it is no longer blind

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AN ODYSSEY
UNDERTAKEN INTO MIND

Righteousness is an Odyssey undertaken into Mind
Everyday work is an incessant outward journey
Dharma keeps *Surta* above temporal grind
That Mind mayn't be stained by lure of money
The outer world is a habitat of countless sights
The inner world is a territory of Divine sound
Worldly Man wastes life on rituals and rites
The wise by allurements remains unbound
The Word becomes Sound by the rigours of *Jap*
When Mind listens to it with rapt attention
The *Shabda* lifts *Surta* steadily up and up
Till a state is reached above the earthly mansion
God is the Light, then, and His Word is the *Guru*
Guru is the Door for reaching God's Home through

RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHEREWITHAL,
SEX, AND SALVATION

Righteousness, Wherewithal, Sex, and Salvation
Are rarely achieved by Man in a single life-span
Life begun in Sex is a long and lusty vacation
Or in frenzied ambition it's a flash in the pan
Correct sequence of The Four should be observed
Or Life must be lived under a harrowing duress
If efforts remain fruitless, no purpose is served
While desires forever multiply, Life is less 'n' less
Righteousness is established by sustained Spirituality
Wherewithal requires great psycho-somatic effort
Sex had better be kept well below sensuality
To save the Soul from collecting much mortal dirt
Salvation lies in the preparation of this solid ground
To help the 'Self' merge in Light through the Sound

SANSKRIT WORD 'VEDAN' HAS
TWO OPPOSED MEANINGS

Sanskrit word '*Vedan*' has two opposed meanings
One denotes 'Knowledge'; the other connotes 'Pain'
'Pain' towards 'Knowledge' bends Man's leanings
Without these two things all Life goes in vain
Knowledge can't be had without rapt Attention
Headache shifts all Attention towards the head
Of no other organ the sufferer makes a mention
The rest of the Body to his focus now seems dead
When Pain draws Attention, Knowledge comes along
Self-Knowledge is Attention drawn towards inner Pain
So the saddest lay sounds as the sweetest song
Then, weaned from Desire, Man begins to be sane
What's called 'Health' is 'Disease' yet under control
Diseases are many; Health is one: Mind become whole

**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

**SPIRITUALITY BEGINS IN KEEPING
THE BODY FIT-'N'-WHOLE**

The soul may be immortal and beyond time 'n' space
But so long it's embodied in flesh, blood 'n' bone
It must obey the laws of mortality with grace,
Or, in the event of violation, it ought to atone
For its own, and not for the sake of laws or their game
Because it can't attain to higher life if it imputes
A blame to the earthy functioning of the mortal frame
Thereby wasting its breath on untenable disputes
"A healthy mind in a healthy body" wasn't uttered
Without insight; the saying has stood time's acid test.
The soul can't be wholesome if the body is shattered:
That's a good reason for upkeep to bring out one's best.
Spirituality begins in keeping the body fit-'n'-whole:
This mortal is yet the temple of the immortal soul.

SPIRITUALITY IS SOUL BLOSSOMING AS A FLOWER

Spirituality is Soul blossoming as a Flower
In the soil of psycho-emotional self-sufficiency
It also stands for Salvation, rooted in endeavour
Goading the Propagation of Individual's tendency
Investing his Reason and Instinct with moral Trust
In Universal Awareness that's steeped in Love
With Insight of Truth lodged in the human breast
Burning with Youth's passion that gives a shove
To the urge for creation as a breath of truth
From which Life bears forth in myriad forms
As the hypnotic quality of an eternal youth
That dwells in the world beyond reckoned norms
Spirituality, in sum, is full growth of self-sufficiency
That exalts the Soul despite many a deficiency

**THE THEIST BELIEVES IN WHAT HE'S
READ OR HEARD**

The Theist believes in what he's read or heard
The Atheist disbelieves the Theist's belief
Both are in a quandary in the midst of human herd
And in debate look for some psychic relief
Centuries of speculation about the elusive God
Have so conditioned our Unconscious Mind
That, enslaved by borrowed thoughts, we take to the rod
To impose on others our convictions blind
Religion, whose primary purpose was to liberate,
Has caught Intelligence in eternal trap
That the things, we do in its name, generate
Less of the sensible and more of crap
How does it matter whether you're a Theist or Atheist?
The crucial thing is to live like a human, *not* a beast!



**THIS BODY HAS BEEN CALLED TEMPLE
OF THE SOUL**

This Body has been called Temple of the Soul
And “I” am, indeed, its in-dwelling spirit
But “I” don’t know what goes on it as a whole
Till it collapses or wastes away bit by bit
Body perishes, but the Soul never dies
So says Self-Knowledge, confounding confusion
It doesn’t reach the place where the secret lies
The Soul’s piety abhors all kinds of intrusion
Only the Destroyer knows the Majesty of Death
As Creator does Life’s Truth in all splendour
The Mind must in-reach to grasp each breath
Till the Knower is drowned in joyous wonder
God alone creates, keeps, destroys—all in all
And subsumes all phenomena big and small

**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.

WAH-E-GURU, ALLAH-HU, RAMA, OR OM

Wah-e-Guru, Allah-hoo, Rama, or Om
Are sanctified words complete in every way
To be chanted as *Mantras* in the privacy of home
To cast the evil spell of the material world away
Success in the material world feeds one’s Vanity
And Lust ‘n’ Greed grow ever more ‘n’ more
Increasing success consumes Man’s entire sanity
Till he falls to the Passions like a hapless whore
Success in the material world draws Man away
From the realm of God and His marvellous grace
Till in the Ego’s dark jungle he loses his way
Yet ruthlessly doubling his pace in the rat race
All needs of the Body are met from the world outside
What the Mind craves is *within*, where God does abide

**WORK IS NO MERE WORSHIP,
IT’S A WHOLE SALVATION**

Work is no mere worship, it’s a whole salvation
Something tangible anyone can with success try.
In work, action combines with contemplation
And gives the bonded soul more ‘n’ more liberty
Whatever his choice, man must strive toward excellence,
Even virtue ‘n’ vice transcend at the extremes
Though excellence is neither indulgence nor continence
But creative optimism in the pursuit of one’s dreams
Even Life sustains itself thro’ continual work
Work makes the life-process creative, ultimately—
To realise this plain truth one must never shirk
But, rather thro’ work, live Life as creatively.
Work, work, yet more work until it becomes recreation:
Creative, wholesome, action in pursuit of human salvation





ABOUT THE BOOK




GURU NANAK DEV – Dispenser of Love and Light is an offbeat addition to the plethora of over 1,000 books that exist on the personality and work of the Founder of the Sikh Faith and his unique contribution to World Religions. This book marks the culmination of the author's study and critical appreciation of *Gurbani* into which he was initiated as a schoolboy by his father Sardar Balwant Singh. Though far removed from the nature and scope of his professional calling – Architecture – the author has studiously researched the subject and brought to it the benefit of insights gained in lifelong engagement in many diverse disciplines. He has not only expanded the scope of the subject but also provided fresh interpretation of esoteric topics like “What is Naam?”

The book is a convincing exposition of the oft-ignored fact that the Sikh Faith is raised on Guru Nanak's Revelation that transcends Metaphysics, The Muse, Mythology, and the Mysticism in its familiar form. *Sikhi* accesses the Realm of Truth [*Sach Khand*] where experience of the Divine becomes the be-all and end-all of endless seeking. It empowers the soul to live life on the dictates of God's Edict-Fiat [*Hukm*—the Arabic word's popular, though erroneous, spelling is *Hukam*] so perfectly and fully that its example itself becomes the path-finder for wayward minds lost in the shifting sands of maverick worldly ambition and mirages of mindless Materialism. The book shows how Guru Nanak's divine utterances [*Bani*] were God's own Commandments delivered to the holy personage for the beneficent guidance of all peoples inhabiting the Planet Earth.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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- Dr SS Bhatti (81) is India's most versatile professional, nicknamed "Chandigarh's Mr Versatility" by Chandigarh Newline of *The Indian Express*. He pursues an amazing range of disciplines: Architecture; Art; Poetry; Criticism; Aesthetics; Engineering; Vocal Music; Musicology; Comparative Religion; Mysticism; Geography; Philosophy; Sociology; Mythology; Planning; Creative Writing; and so forth.
 - He holds three PhDs: first one titled: "**CHANDIGARH** and the Context of Le Corbusier's 'Statute of the Land': A Study of Plan, Action, and Reality" [1991]; the second on "**CREATIVE MYSTICISM: A Study of Guru Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japuji**" [2000]; and the third on "**SRI HARMANDAR SAHIB: A Study of Architecture, Engineering, and Aesthetics**" [2008]. He won the Fifth JIIA [Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects] National Award for Excellence in Architecture [Research Category] for the first PhD in 1993. The second one was honoured by Guru Har Krishan Educational Society, Chandigarh, as the Best Doctorate done in 2000 at the Department of Guru Nanak Sikh Studies, Panjab University.

- He inherited from his father Sardar Balwant Singh Bhatti the family's creative versatility and the pursuit of excellence besides love for *Gurbani* and insightful understanding of the great Indian art and cultural tradition. His father designed Gurdwara **Panja Sahib** Hasan Abdal [now in Pakistan] and Takht Shri Kesgarh **Anandpur Sahib**, and was a past master in Sikh Architecture [his article on this subject can be seen on the Internet], painting, sculpture, wood-carving, Indian classical music, and Greco-Indian style of wrestling.
- Dr Bhatti has striven to extend the family tradition of versatile creativity to become India's foremost protagonist of what he calls *Holistic Humanism*. He has made enormous contribution to many different fields which fact is widely acknowledged by eminent professionals working in them. He has to his credit three thousand works of Art, and has written more than 5,000 poems in English, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi has conferred on him *Best Book of the Year Award for 2019* for his anthology of quatrains titled *Shu'oor-i-Bekhudi* [Knowledge of the Unconscious Self] in Urdu Poetry Category 🌿

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