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SIKHISM AND SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture, is the living Guru of Sikhs. Shri Guru Granth Sahib is the only religious scripture which embodies the sayings of its authors in their original form as spoken from the hearts, full of Divine enlightenment. The essential part, known as GURBANI is also claimed to be directly from the source (God) as Gurus were in tune with the Supreme Lord. Hymns of this Holy Granth, have the potency of removing entire worry, anxiety and make man egoless and pure. Further Shri Guru Granth Sahib as true teacher, has complete capability of providing enlightenment and guidance for the seeker. It is an ocean of Praises of God and teachings for mankind to have truthful and noble living.

1. Composition and Structure of Adi Granth

The primary portion of Adi Granth, was compiled in 1604 by the Fifth Guru Arjan Dev. The same Granth is now known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib after Guru Granth Sahib the tenth Sikh Guru bestowed it the seat of Guru. It includes Hymns and teachings of first five Sikh Gurus-Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552), Guru Amardas (1476-1574), Guru Ramdas (1534-1581), Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) and Ninth Guru Teg Bahadur (1622-1675). There is one *sloka* which some scholars credit to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru (1666-1708). Beside the hymns of these sikh Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib have compositions of over thirty other saints-poets having rich spiritual experience. These Saints are from different castes creed, religions and social background. Most important from this list are Hindu Bhaktas of Medieval India like Kabir, Ramanand, Ravidas, Surdas, Sain and Bhiman from UP; Jaidev from Bengal, Namadeva, Trilochan and Paramanand from Maharashtra, Pipa and Dhana from Rajasthan and Beni who was popular all over North India and five Muslim divine souls Baba Farid, Bhikhan, Satta, Balwand and Mardana. This Guru Granth Sahib is the only religious scripture which perhaps has shown this catholicity of outlook in bringing together the diversified views and tenents of various faiths.

However, hymns which find place in Granth have been duly subjected to the touch stone of truth for their confirmity to basic teachings of Gurus by its complier.

Guru Granth Sahib is a huge scripture of 1430 pages, written in poetry form (31 ragas) using common people's languages, with total hymns of the order of 5894, with the message, common for all, without distinction of any kind, based on His NAMA; referred to the Supreme Sole Reality, the God, and His all pervading manifestation, Love and pure conducts. The arrangements of these hymns is as follows in First Japaji, then nine hymns which are repeated later in Granth in Raga Asa and Gujri, followed by extracts from Ragas Gujri, Asa and Dhanasari which are traditionally recited by Sikhs as part of their morning, evening and night (just before retiring) prayers.

Then follows the Bani which forms the main body of the Granth. Each Raga starts with Hymns form Gurus and ends with that of Bhaktas.

Last portion of the Granth consists of Sanskriti Slokas by Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun; Gatha, Phunbe and Chaubolas by Guru Arjun, Slokas of Kabir and Farid; savaiyas by Guru Arjun and by Bhats several Bards in praise of first five Gurus; Shlokas by Guru Nanak, which were left over from verses and shlokas by Guru Amar Das, Ramdas Arjun and Guru Teg Bahadur. The piece called Mundavani is the concluding chapter of the spiritual portion of the Granth. The last piece, called Ragmala, is a catalogue of the Ragas and their families. Out of the total hymns largest contribution is by Guru Arjun Dev with 2216 and then Guru Nanak with 976, further followed by Guru Angad Dev, Amardas, Ramdas, Guru Teg Bahadur and Bhaktas and Bards with 61, 907, 679, 118 and 937 respectively.

2. Style of Composition

Gurus and Bhaktas used most of the Indian prosody with innumerable variation to make the hymns more musical and lyrically intense. The poetry, true in divine knowledge, is rich in homely and direct metaphor one come across in daily life. This creates a perfect atmosphere of harmony between subject matter and its form. The thought process of Granth is latest and unique. It has provided

newer, meaningful definitions and socially more useful interpretations to various old religious conceptions. This established the commonality of religious truths so that humanity at large can attain common goal of spiritual and social uplift no matter what path one chooses.

3. The Basic Contents Precepts and Teachings

Broadly, the ethico - spiritual precepts of the Gurus in Sri Guru Granth Sahib can generally be summed up under the following main headings:

1. Need for improvement of man to be on righteous path both spiritually and socially, so that life can be dedicated to compassion and service to humanity.
2. The nature of relation of man to man, as it ought to be, by way of rejecting all discriminative social systems such as human caste code.
3. Repudiation of meaningless rituals, devotion and religious dogmas.
4. The absolute belief in one and sole supreme reality and union of man with this spiritual entity, which is said to be "within us". This union called "Sanjog", which is the highest the man aims at.

The cardinal theme in the Granth puts unparalleled stress on moral conducts or praxis and continuity of existence in terms of spiritual unity not only with respect to man and God but throughout the creation, thus laying down the firm foundation of universal brotherhood and humanitarian society.

The Guru Granth Sahib's spirituality is based on unicity of God and social ethics on humanity making its teachings universal and rational. This then inspires the seeker to not only wish but work for uplift of total humanity. Gurbani also suggests practical steps having scientific approach to achieve this by way of complete renunciation of slander of others, renunciation of enmity, altruism, social service and many more such result oriented methods/techniques. So Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a beautiful temple of unity of mankind built on the foundation stones of unicity and other attributes of God never seen earlier in religious history.

Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev himself describes Guru Granth Sahib as a platter with three spiritual food items of moral values: Truth, contentment, and wisdom. Further he says that the Nectrous "NAMA" of God which sustains everything in this world, is also there. Whosoever cherish this will flourish and get liberated. Hence the seeker must keep this always in his heart.¹

A careful reading and understanding of Sikh scripture also reveals that religion of Sikhism (path shown by Granth) has following postulates implicit in its teachings.

1. That there is no essential duality between the spirit and the matter.²
2. That man alone has capacity to enter into conscious participation in the process of Evolution and its further progress.³
3. That when the man reaches the highest goal of Evolution, namely, the vision of God, he must not be absorbed back into God but achieves Godly attributes and become purified personality "Sachiara" also called Jeevanmukta (The bestowed one who have attained the Truth.) In this state too he remains worldly conscious and works for transforming this mundane world into a higher and spiritual plane of existance.⁴

The path, the Discipline, which Guru Granth Sahib recommends for a seeker as necessary and efficacious for attaining God consciousness and for yoking it to the evolutionary transformation of life and humanity on this earth and on the plane of mundane existance, is the practice of "NAMA".

Broadly speaking "The Discipline of Nama" combine the real essence of the concepts of selfless actions (Karma marga), devotion (Bhakti marga) and gnosis (Jnana marga) to greater extent, but it is not completely identical to any of these. The synthesis has given a new Marga, which in the light of terms used in the Granth,

1. That vich thin vastu payiao : Mundavani M-5.
2. Sargun Aap, nirgnu bhi ohi : Sukhmani V.
3. Kayi Janam bhaie kit patanga Mil Jagdis, Milan Ki Baria : Gauri 5.
4. Gauri Sukhmani M-5

should be called *Wismad Marga* on practical side and *Nama Marga* on the theoretical side. It is a distinction in names, otherwise they are the two aspect of same process. It is also called "*Sahaj Marga*", as it leads one to equipozeness, and is claimed to be the righteous path for mankind of present age.

Throughout its voluminous pages of the *Granth*, it is stressed again and again with wealth of metaphor and imaginary, illustrative material and exposition, that the "*Discipline of Nama*" is only suitable and efficacious practice for leading to the vision of God for final fulfilment of man, for cancelling his basic alienation and granting the seeker an everlasting pleasure. It is the *Nama* once again which removes the sickness and the limitations of human mind and purify one's heart. Glory of *Nama* is so much emphasised that Sikhism can be called as the religion of "*Nama*".

So "*Nama Marga*" lays the emphasis on psychological and spiritual integration, uses the techniques of *Bhakti*, provide the right direction to the emotions for achieving supreme goal. Man on this path leading the active worldly life remain detached like lotus in water. He is then motivated not by self ego but his individual self which is yoked to Universal self.

4. The Ethical Emphasis

Guru *Granth Sahib* constantly stresses that unless a man leads an unstained ethical life he can not achieve Godly nature. Proper codes of morality, dignity, honesty, truthfulness and other moral standards and virtues have been laid down with uttermost clarity and need is stressed for their practice with full sincerity. Thus there is no aspect of human life which is not dwelt upon in the Holy *Granth*.

Fruitless rituals, dogmas and maceration have no place in sikhism. The contributors to the *Guru Granth Sahib* were the Godly persons with vision. They were sensitive to socio-natural environment of man and various facets of the human life. That's why *Gurbani* critically examined many faiths, social customs, traditions etc. and showed the righteous path. It stressed the need to be true to individual religion or faith and direct the person to understand the real essence in the teachings of their

prophets and follow them with full devotion and sincerity to the core of their heart.

In the simple terms the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib can be summarised as "Nam Japo" (Remember God with Love and Reverence), "Kirt Karo" (Earn your own livelihood by honest and hard work) and "Wand Chhako" (Share the portion of this earning with your fellow beings for their uplift). Further for completeness and real happiness Guru Granth Sahib recommends "Sangat" (Association of Holy persons) "Sewa" (Service to humanity) and humility.

Guru Granth Sahib has a vision of ethical world Society, in which equality, justice and harmony will ultimately prevail. The society be vitalised continuously by afflatus of religious truths. It will be open, tolerant and catholic in nature for sustaining a creative world culture with spiritual dignity. This law of the social coherence have been indicated in the Granth as :

It has been ordained by Merciful Lord
That no one should domineer over other.
That none should harm another nor exploit,
Only then may be world abide in Peace
Such is the order of Lord's Benevolence.⁵

5. Adi Granth as Guru

It was 1708 when Guru Gobind Singh gave a final commandment to all Sikhs to accept Adi Granth as Guru and thereafter Sri Guru Granth Sahib is providing "Gaddi Raha" (The Grand High Way) as Bhai Gurdas, a renowned figure in Sikhs defines, to entire humanity as true Guru, to achieve spirituality for becoming "Sachiara" and live a truthful life as per the God's wish.

After briefly touching the fringes of vast treasures of the Granth, some of the important aspects of Sikhism as directed by Sri Guru Granth Sahib may be presented now.

6. Concept of God

Right in the beginning, the Mulmantra of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the concept of God is narrated as Sole Supreme Being of Eternal

5. Hun Hukam hoyia meharwanda : (Sri Rag M 5)

manifestation; Creator, Immanent Reality; without fear, without rancour, Timeless form, Unincarnated, self existant, realized by the grace of holy preceptor. He is ever True.⁶ Deeper study of these holy words not only reveals the divine attributes of the Supreme Lord, but also provide the essence of Gurbani and gives basic tenet of Sikh religion and its theology.

One personal Absolute God conceived by Sikhism is also all embracing and whole in His activity and Being. He is transcendent and yet Immanent, the most visible. He is remembered by numerous attributive names still He is above names. No real name can be attributed to him, however the concept of expressing Him as all pervasive Reality and concrete truth of His existance can be done by word proposed by the Scripture as 'SATNAM' (He is the Truth or Ever True). He is stated as unreachable, ineffable, unutterable, indefinable, unpierceable, without being, eternal, beyond time and space, indestructable, ever the same, unfathomable, unknowable, beyond the reach of senses, farthest of the far, higher of the high without religion, race, caste or sex, attributeless, Absolute, self contained, of Himself born, Invisible, known only but intuitively. And yet this is but only His one aspect. He is one but many at same time,⁷ He is farthest of the far yet nearest of near. For, He is also immanent, all prevading light and soul, the indweller and inner-relisher and knower of all things, the filler. He is not goodness but good, not kindness but kind, not mercy but merciful.

He is Purusha, the being, the Presence, the Man, the only He, the eternal Groom of us all; who are his brides, human with moral, intellectual, emotional and social attributes. He is not merely the Creator, but also wills, and have a discriminating sense of values and judgement.⁸ He is compassionate and just, loves and hugs with warmth that drives out all our doubts and sorrows. And being all wise He cannot be deceived.

Study of Guru Granth Sahib reveals that God is conceived in Sikhism as integration of total attributes, both within and beyond the vision of humanity with one basic concept that man should attain

6. Ek Omkar Satnam : Japuji 1.

7. Ape har ek rang hai ape bahu rangi Jo tis bhav nanka Sain gal changi. : (Tilang M 4 Page No 726)

8. Nanak; He acts as is His will And with sense of Discrimination : Ase M - 1

Him as ultimate goal, to be in equipoise. He is also the Master and we have to render account of our deeds to Him.⁹ Apart from he being beneficent and compassionate and loving, He is the protector and destroyer of evils. He is almighty and powerful enough to do anything what He wish. He wields His Power always and for ever for eternal good. He is God of grace giving so abundantly that receiver says, "enough, no more".¹⁰ He is purifier of sinners, His wish keeping our honour irrespective of how vicious our deeds are provided with full sincerity we submit ourselves to His Order/wish thus Law of Karma is no longer inexorable in Sikhism once we wished to be transformed.¹¹

How do we then address, remember or envoke such a God? Guru Granth Sahib suggest that he can be remembered by almost all the names known to Hindu mythology or scriptures and to the semetic religions, so long as we mean the same Supreme Being. However the most common name that comes to a Sikh spontaneously, is "Waheguru"(the wonderful Lord). Obviously it is more the sense of wonder that is awakened in the thought of His being wonderous than any emotion.

7. Realization of God: Nama Yoga

Like many other religions Sikhism also lays large emphasis on realizing God as our destiny. The goal of human life is to become like him and merge in Him, which is achieved by acquiring His attributes. For this "As one serve, remember or worship as one becomes"¹² concept based technique, the Nama Yoga, proposed by Guru Granth Sahib seems to be the only means with promise of desired results. But what is 'Nama'? It is the qualitative expression of God's personality, His attributes, and a symbol that treasures within itself all that God is, and is not. It too is the all pervading spirit, the Bright Essence which forms all life, all creation. As Guru says;

9. *Lekha rab mangesia* (The Lord will ask thee to render thy account He will face thee with thy deeds) : (Var Ramkali III, Staloka M - 1).

10. *Denda deh lende thak pahie* : (Japuji 1)

11. *By His eye of grace, all are best* : (Japuji 1)

12. *Jaise seve tesha Hoi* : Gauri M 5, Page. 223)

The Nama informs all creatures, all beings. The Nama informs all world, all universes.¹³

So in this sense "Nama" is the all pervading spirit which sustains and gives meaning to His whole creation. Guru Nanak in Japuji states that as much as He has created, that much is His Nama.¹⁴ Once this all pervading spirit 'Nama' is realised, one merges in the Being of God, becomes like Him. But this "Nama" is obtained through Guru's word which is then to be uttered, sung, heard with acceptance of its validity, dwell upon and contemplated. Guru warns this not to be uttered as name, mechanically, but its real essence to be realized. The importance of this aspect is emphasized in large number of hymns in Guru Granth Sahib, such as "Every one utters the 'Nama' of the Lord but by mere utterance one realises Him not; When through the Guru's Grace, the Lord is enshrined in the mind, one gathers the fruit (Gujri M-3).

'Nama' as magical specific words and formulas, uttered in special way leading to spirituality, without real communication from heart with Him, are denounced by the Guru. He affirmed repeatedly that "Nama" is not muttering by tongue as people take, it is communication of the heart,¹⁵ it is the feeling of His total presence with us and is indication of one's egoless state. "Nama" cannot be defined by words as God.¹⁶ It is a positive attitude of mind towards life and the world and is supreme state of pleasure felt in aesthetic appreciation of the working of God at time expressing in terms like wonderful Lord-Waheguru. With 'Nama' one feels mystic unity with Lord and is obvious from his inner feeling, facial glooming, verbal expression and physical actions. 'Nama' is actual realization and is achieved through gradual development of our mental and spiritual life. There are 5 stages as Guru Nanak brings out in Japuji, it is a journey starting from 'Dharma Khand' with the destination as "sach khanda". This no one has achieved and none can achieve

13. Name ke there sagle jant : (Gauri Sukhmani - 5)

14. (a) Jeta Keeta teta nauon : (Japuji 1)

(b) Apni aap sajke, apine rakhio nauon : (Rag Asa M 1)

15. (a) Bin Jihwa jo Japuji Hiai, Koi Jane Kaisa nau (Malan Mahala 1, P. 1255)

(b) Nam nidhana wasia ghat antari rasna Hari gun gai : (Malar M 4 1264)

16. Dristman akhkhari hai jeta Nanak Parbhraham nirlepa : (Bawan Khkhari sloka 59, P 261)

without the True Guru.¹⁷ Detailed account of 'Nama' marga as path of Bhakti marga, the surrendering to God's wish with no feeling of fear,¹⁸ as Karma marga, with the aim to become 'Nihakarmi' (Above deeds/actions)¹⁹ and as Jnana marga (path of knowledge), making man "egoless" and more thirsty of Him is given in Guru Granth Sahib. So it is synthesised and integrated path of realization. That's why Guru says: "if there is Nama I live, if not I die". To him it is ambrosia. Further in Rag Bharoin Guru repeats five time the word beautiful/wonderful to qualify "Nama" "Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful is Thy Nama". But without 'Nama' man lives of snake, a crow, a filthy worm, a dog, a pig, a donkey etc. (Rag Gauri Mahala V, 8-7). The metaphors are used to express some specific vices. 'Nama' stands for life and life is dead without "Nama". All activities of human being without 'Nama' are worthless and cause bondage and suffering "(GGGS page 40, 8-11). An animal is better than man without Nama (Rag Guri M 1, p489). Guru goes on counting all luxuries and places 'Nama' over every conceivable pleasure of word (Sukhmani-5 GGS page 246) and that is why finally the devotee requests almighty "Were a mansion of pearls erected and inlaid with gems for me; perfumed with musk, saffron, fragrant aloes and sandal to confer delight; may not these things O God, make me forget 'Nama'". (Sri Rag M 1).

8. Man and His Destiny

Man is the central figure of whole universe. Religion and philosophy are developed for giving direction to the human life. Man comes and goes as everything else under "His Will". The individual takes birth infused with Godly light under His "Hukum" (Order), which works according to some laws. According to Guru, law of birth of man is "law of Karma".²⁰ We put on, the garb of this body, according to our actions of past life. The law works both progressively and regressively. In its progressive direction the final stage is man.²¹ So it is the last emanation, the last step of the staircase of creation and the only opportunity to merge in Supreme

17. Bin Satguru Mukat na pai : (Ram Kali M - 3 Anand)

18. Nirbhav jape sagal bhav mite : (Sukmani - 5)

19. Karam karat Hoi Nikarmi, Tis ko hot parepat Swamy : (Sukmani - 5)

20. Karmi Awai Kapra : (Japuji 1)

21. Kai Jaman bhae kit patanga : (Gairo, M-5 P. 176)

Being, as expressed the entry into sachkhand-the realm of Truth; and falling from this he again enters into cycles of births and deaths.²² It is expressly stated that human life is the only most favourable opportunity for getting this release. With only the singleness of mind, effort guided by Guru in this direction and influence of society of saints and holy people, the grace of Supreme Lord, it can be secured.

The common belief that two main constituents of human being are the soul and body is recognised in Sikhism too. The soul is the support and essence of life and it is inherently active.²³ It is also established in Granth by numerous descriptions that all attributive soul is resident in the colony of the body. Body itself is described as temple of God²⁴ and its superiority by saying that even Gods pray for it.²⁵ Naturally any idea of ruining this body by ascetic exercises or penances was opposed by the Guru, however its basic necessities must be attended to with the care one does not become bodily minded. The same body at its farther end becomes mind, which is an evolute and therefore, phenomenal. In essence it too is spiritual and divine and so one is advised in Gurbani to understand its origin²⁶ and its importance. Gurbani also affirms that there is nothing intervening between God and individual soul, but man feel separated due to his own self; the 'Ego'.²⁷ Source of human soul and its destiny is also the same God, and Guru says, this destiny is not far away it is thyself. The two are same like sun and the ray, like fire and the spark and like the heap

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22. (a) Bhai parapat manakh dehuria, Gobind milan ki eh teri baria : (Aas M 5)
 (b) Lakh Chaurasih jone sabai, Mans Kau Prabhi die wadai, Is pauri te jo nar chukai so ai jai dukh painda : (Maru solhe M 5, P. 1075)
23. (a) Ih sarir sabha dharma hai, jis andari sachche ki wichi joti : (Gauri ki Var M 4, P. 309).
 (b) Ea Saria meria Hari tum mahi joti rakhi ta tun jag mahi aia : (Ramkali M 3, Anand).
24. Gauri Gaureri M-5 p. 180, Maru M-1 page 1031, Maru M-3 P. 1058, Maru M-1, Dakhani P. 1032, Maru M-1 P. 1038 etc. Eh sarir harmandir hai.
25. Is dehi kau simrahi dev : (Bhalvo Kabiv Jio P. 1159)
26. Man tun jot sarup Hain apna mul pachhan : (Aas M 3, P. 441)
27. (a) Brahman Mahi jan, Jan Mahi Parabrahman : (Gauri Sukhmani - 5)
 (b) Atam Mahi Ram. Ram Mahi Atam : (Bhoroi Asht padli M-1) P. 1541
 (c) Hari, Harjan dui ek hain bib Vichar Kichhu nahian : (Dasam Granth).

of dust and its particles.²⁹ The technique to achieve this transmigration is, keeping one's ego under restraint and seek truth by "Nama Marg" which means no denouncing of the world, remaining house holder but engaged in beneficent activities, keeping mind absorbed in contemplation and devotion, but no monastic or ascetic kind of life, no Yogas, no Bhogas, no rituals, no religious Dogmas, remaining like lotus symbolizing purity amid the impurities of the world, remaining ever self abiding in bliss of God-consciousness. No forced, unnatural austerities or esoteric praxis but it is simple pure spiritual process as outlined by Guru Nanak in Japu of "Suniyai" (listening, absorption of holy teachings), Mannei (contemplation, firm faith) and Dhyan (Meditation). To these are added Devotion (Bhakti) and spiritual self discipline as outlined in stanza 38 of 'Japu' and the performance of beneficent actions. This ethico-spiritual scheme as said earlier too is termed as "Sahaj Marga" and "wismad marga" because of its capacity of wonderful results and taking man to wonderous Godly World. Gurbani provides necessary instruction to be perfected on this path³⁰ and guarantees that remaining worldly with mind attached to Supreme Lord, distinction is achieved just simply with no real effort.³¹

9. Social Aspects of Guru Granth Sahib

For the completeness of the life wherein Guru Granth Sahib shows the paths of higher spirituality with stress on need of moral living.³² The concept of harmony and equality is presented here as Godly wish bindings on human actions so that sound basis is established for universal unity. Unicity of God, Unicity of Guru (Sabad/Eternal word), Human equality beyond any social barriers such as caste, creed, race etc., Unicity of Religions (religion in its true sense with common universal prayers for mankind) and

28. Prabh Dur Nahi. Prabh Tun Hain : (Asa M 1, P. 354)

29. Suraj kiran mili jal ka jal hua Ram : (Bilawal M 5, P. 846)

30. Nama kahe Trilochna, mukh te Ram sambhale Hath peri kar kam sabh chit niranjan nali : (Slok Kabir P. 213).

31. (a) Sebad Surat bhav sagar tarie Nanak nam vakhane : (Sidh Gusti Rag Ramkali M 1)

(b) Nanak Satgurbhetia puri hove jugat, Hasandian, Khelendian, Khawandian Viche hove mukat : (Gujri ki var M 5, P. 522)

32. Ustat man main kar Nirankar, Kar man mere sat biohar : (Gauri Sukhmani 5)

oneness of worldly creation as divine order are the foundation stones of social ethics on which universal brotherhood concept of Sikhism is based upon. The social equality in Sikhism has not arisen from any rationalization but from realization of the spiritual unity of mankind and it asserts not only that men are equal but this equality ought to be realized in conduct also.

Recognising well to its core that we are children of same one God,³³ the principle of Universal brotherhood as endowment of all persons naturally directs us to seeking good of all and working for the same, since this is the practical way of realization of unity of mankind. However, good of all is not an affair of mental or intellectual ascent and attitude only but ought to be actualized by service to mankind with total sincere commitment.

This brings man to the level of feeling of "fellow human beings are not other but cosharer of same source of emanation and part of same spiritual order".³⁴ Further this bond of existence in the world is confirmed when Guru Nanak says: "air is Guru, water is father and great earth is mother. In the lap of two nurses night and day the whole world is brought up".³⁵ Learning from the teachings of Gurbani and adopting the same to lead life, man becomes perfect as he ought to be as human being.

For a man to be of his real worth Guru Granth Sahib insists for him to be all virtuous. These virtues exist in their full potentials in human being but under the influence of 'Ego' he does not recognise it. Ultimate of this virtueness is 'Nama' or God's light/spark which also abides in human body. So there is no basic duality on this aspect. In normal situations this perfectness is shadowed by five vices lust, anger, avarice/covetousness, attachment and pride, combining together as 'Ego'; a feeling of human being as separate identity than God. Guru says man in ignorance is being looted constantly by these.³⁶ All other bad qualities leading to immoral life are by product of these basic instincts. Through Guru's guidance and grace of Supreme Lord one realizes this. By offering

33. Ek pita Ekas ke hum balik : (Sorath M 5, P. 612)

34. Sabhe sanjiwal Sadain Koina dise baharajio : (Rag Majh, M 5, P. 97)

35. Pawan guri pani pita : (Japuji, P. 8)

36. Esh dehi mein panch chore vasei : (Sorath M 3, P. 600)

prayers and dedicated effort one conquers and overpowers these for his uplift.³⁷ These vices get transformed into virtues such as, truthfulness, contentment, chastity, self control etc which make him perfect human being.³

10. Authority and Schools of Interpretations of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

The essential part of Guru Granth Sahib as said earlier too is "Gurbani" (Utterance of Guru's Words) and this Gurbani is given a seat of Guru. The source of this is treated as divine. As believed and experienced, Gurus were God inspired personalities, in direct communication and harmony with Supreme Lord, the God. Guru Nanak emphasises this to Bhai Lalo saying "As the Master (God) direct me to utter, I say".³⁹ Further he claims that this "Bani" belong to "Mahapurakh" (Great Creator - The God)⁴⁰ and is God Himself.⁴¹ This Bani is also Guru, and Guru is Bani (Word) and all nector reside in it.⁴² This "Dhur ki Bani" (Divine word) has potency to remove all worries.⁴³ Gurbani is also termed the "Sat Guru", True Teacher or enlighter of Truth and one is adviced by Gurbani to accept this from core of his heart for results.⁴⁴ These are a few illustrations from the long list of hymns which brings out beyond doubt that Gurbani is divine in nature and is embodiment in visible form of the essence of the Person of Ten Holy Gurus (Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh). Sikhs are ordained tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh to treat this Granth/Gurbani as a sacred Person, the Guru, rather than a merely religious scripture or book.⁴⁵ This honour, one can easily see, in Sikh way of life, no matter whether holy Granth is kept in state, or leads the congressional prayer meeting where

37. Panch bikhadi ek gariba rakho rakhan hare (Gauri M 5, P. 205-6)

38. Sat santokh nagar mehn kari : (Maru M 1 P. 1037)

39. Jaisee main aave khasam ki bani, tesra karin bian ve lalo : Tilang M 1 Page 722

40. Eh bani Mahapurakh ki niz khar vasa hoi : Dhakni Omkar - Ramkali M 1 Page 935

41. Wah Wah Bani Nirankar Hai Tis Jevad awar na koi Stok M 3, Page 515

42. Bani Guru, Guru hei bani wich bani amrit sare : Nat M 4 Page 982.

43. Dhurki bani aayi tin sagli chint mitai : Sorath M 5 Page 628.

44. Eh bani jo, jioh jane, tis antar rave hari nama : Bilawal M 3 Page 797.

45. Sab Sikhian ko Humam hai Guru Maneo Granth : Guru Gobind Singh Kabir vach Benti Chaupai.

recitation and kirtan (holy musically sung prayers) and other due ceremonial being performed. The spread of canopy or awning over the holy throne (seat), of Guru Granth Sahib in 'Prakashawtha', (opened scripture for oracles and reading for guidance), duly being waved with fly whisk (chanwar), and covered in costly clothes marks its sacred character and royalty.

The source material which form Sri Guru Granth Sahib is authentic as same was being preserved by Guru after Guru upto Guru Arjun Dev who finally compiled this in form of Adi Granth and established "Pothi Parmeshwar ka than" meaning almost Granth as God, in Harimandir (popularly known as Golden Temple) at Amritsar. Harimandir was specifically built by Guru Arjun Dev in the middle of the Pool made by his holy father Guru Ramdas in which the Granth was given highest seat to loud the revealed vision of Guru Nanak and to worship one formless, Supreme Being, 'Ek Omkar' The "Akal Purakh", and no other diety whatsoever visible or invisible.

The Hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sahib have been subject matter of study ever since of its existance by both the individual scholars and institutions. The work in this direction was initially done by 'Nirmalas' who have been treated as scholars of Sikh's traditional teachings and were also made responsible for spreading Sikh religion. Similar efforts are also to the credit of Dhamdami Talisal, the Centre founded by Guru Gobind Singh Himself with Baba Deep Singh, a great Sikh warrior as its first care taker The approach of these however have a touch of orthodoxy to some extent and influence of 'Sanatan Dharma' and Hinduism. On the other hand Sikh scholars like Prof. Sahib Singh, Prof. Teja Singh, Prof. Ganda Singh and renowned saint poet Bhai Vir Singh have also brought out explanation of complete hymns of Guru Granth Sahib. The interpretation given by these scholars and the essence which emerges from this class of work has definite influence of individual scholar's academic and spiritual status level. It is but natural in such cases, as "Gurbani" brings out categorically that enlightenment received by an individual as per understanding bestowed by the Lord on him.⁴⁶ Gurbani in the form of Guru

46. Jaisi mati deyi taisa pargas : Gouri Sukhmani M 5

is like an ocean full of pearls (Virtues), more one goes in depth more he finds the treasure.⁴⁷ Seeker always find newer and newer clear interpretation of the hymns⁴⁸ as he puts effort, which also according to Sri Guru Granth Sahib is Lord's Grace. Perfectness in this direction definitely demands the ultimate in spirituality and academic scholarship. This is a rare combination one can really possess in practice. Out of these efforts however the work of prof. Sahib Singh has found wide acceptance in Sikh Community as a whole. It is worth mentioning that his work is probably the only work which is also based upon the special Grammar called "Gurbani Biakaran."

Other significant and authentic source material for this is the "Vars" of Bhai Gurudas, who enjoyed the holy association of first six Gurus. These "Vars" are treated as keys to Guru Granth Sahib for bringing out the essence of its teachings.

Dharma Prachar Sub Committee of Siromani Gurduara Prabandak Committee, Amritsar and various other religious centres and Departments of Universities are also, carrying out continuous and valuable research work on this aspect of Guru Granth Sahib. Many a interpretation of a given hymns may differ widely, or totally which can only be resolved with the help of other hymns on the subject from Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Beside this one can look for the help from the "Akal Takhat" as the final authority to give verdict if needed in such situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is not out of place if one says that Guru Granth Sahib represents the sublime and pure spirit of God. This is as expressed One Word, One Guru, sole description of holy message. It is one shop of Truth with Pearls as commodity.⁴⁹ It is His (Lord) word and song of Gurus and Bhagats of medieval India. It is complete and unmatched. Guru Granth

47. (a) Gur Sagar ratni bharpure : Rag Dhanasari M 1 Page 685.

(b) Gur Sagaro ratnagro, Tit ratan ghanere Ram. : Ase M 1 Chhant Page 437

48. Sahib mera neet nawan : Rag Dhanasari M 1 Page 660.

49. Eka bani, Ek Curu, Eko sabad Vichar : (Surath Ki var M 4 P. 646)

Sahib and Sikhism is not separable. Holy Message of Guru Granth Sahib, due to its universality and scientific approach, is capable of providing guidance to the total humanity. This in practice is nothing but the way of life, as it ought to be. It is what Sikhism stands for. Careful and detail study of Guru Granth Sahib, reveals so its seeker, the true meaning of life, a correct understanding of various spiritual and social perspectives. Guru Granth Sahib has provided unmatched, unparallel and newer not known earlier to the humanity the interpretation related to almost all aspects of the religion both theory and practice. Inspirations received from reading of Guru Granth, Sahib, reading for understanding and understanding to adopt the same as way of Life is beyond expression. Further living as Gurbani, Guru guarantees the ultimate achievement, the total success, the "Jeevan Mukti".⁵⁰ Although it is beyond the ability of one to bring out all aspects of Sri Guru Granth Sahib to the extend, these mean, as this needs almost same spiritual level as Gurus had if not more, an humble and insignificant attempt is made in this paper to touch some of the fringes of this vast ocean/treasure of guidance.

50. Satguru non sabhko dekda, jichar sabh sansar Dithe mukat na hoia, jichar sabhad No keeti vichar : (Rag Vadhans sloka M 3, P. 594)