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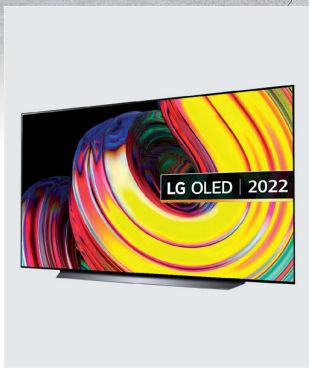
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Editorial

Time passes and events turn into history, and world must know the truth of history. About 550 years ago Guru Nanak, the founder to Sikhism brought a message of three noble truths from the Almighty. The message was handed personally by the Almighty to Guru Nanak, when He had called Guru Nanak for a briefing in about 1507. The meeting took place in God's chamber 'called Sach Khand' up above in the skies.

The three noble truths were:

Nam Japo (Worship the Almighty),

Kirt Karo (Do honest work. Dignity of labour), and

Wand ke Chhako (Share whatever you have – feed the hungry, clothe the naked and shelter the roofless)

Why these noble truths have not been properly recorded in the world history and passed on to the coming generations?.

The followers of Guru Nanak called themselves as 'Sikhs', though Guru Nanak had said that we are all children of one God, and the labels of religions, such as Hindus and Muslims are not relevant. The labels divide whereas God's message is of UNITY.

The history is evident that most of the bloodshed in the world is in the name of Religion. The labels have spread hatred rather than love. From Moses about 4000 years ago, through the eras of Treta, Dwapar and now Kalyug, the pages of history are red with the blood of the innocent.

The Messengers, the Avatars, the Paigambers and the Gurus had all come to spread the message of God, the message of love and unity. Then why there is hatred and bloodshed everywhere?.

The only answer to this question is that the followers of Messengers, Avatars, Paigambers and Gurus did not spread the true message rather distorted the Divine message and spread whatever suited them. It is a pity that the whole humanity had to go through this turmoil and bear the brunt of distorted historical teachings, records and facts. Love was recorded as hatred, unity was recorded as disunity and togetherness was recorded as enmity.

The time has come when we the followers of Guru Nanak, shed all distinctions, and spread the message of love and unity of Guru Nanak throughout the known world. Why can't the Gurbani be translated in all world languages to spread the Divine message of love? Why can't the Janam Sakhis be also translated in all languages so that the world knows the messages of the Sikh Gurus.

Let the history books, with true and accurate messages, reach every world library, university, college, school and club and readers know about the true value of LOVE.

Guru Nanak's noble truths are to be spread in all the corners of the globe. Let us do that together without fear or fervour.



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MATA GUJRI

Dr. Paramjit Kaur Virdee

Bibi Gujri was born in 1624 in Kartarpur (Jalandhar District) Punjab. Her father was known as Lal Chand Subhikhi and her mother's name was Bishan Kaur. They belonged to the village, Lakhnaur in District Ambala. Bibi Gujri was engaged to Tegh Bahadur in 1629, at the tender age of five. In 1633, Bibi Gujri was married to Tegh Bahadur.

Tegh Bahadur and his family stayed in Bakala for about twenty years. The needs of life were fulfilled by the income from the zamindari of Hargobind Pura. Other people helped with the daily chores, but certainly, it was not the lifestyle that the women of the Guru Ghar were used to. Tegh Bahadur got busy with his prayer and meditation in a cell. The mother and the daughter-in-law longed for a child in the house but could do nothing had to wait for the mercy of God, and so, accepted the situation as the will of the Almighty. It was the Mother who could carry whatever little food was required for the son in the cell. Bibi Gujri was not permitted to do so. One can hardly imagine all she must be feeling. What turbulence would she be going through? Her husband, the reputed saint soldier, the ideal successor of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji was deprived of his inheritance and she had lost all the glory that would have been hers. Now she craved a child, but even the simple pleasures of an ordinary woman seemed to be unattainable. Only one course was open to her, and that was the one of prayer and meditation. The same path that her husband had chosen for himself. After all, she must have thought, what was she if not a part of her master? How could she forget the teachings of her mother at the time of her departure from the parental home? Religiously,

she adopted the routine of her husband. Both husband and wife carried on with this pattern of life for about twenty years. This company and compatibility had demolished all other barriers. Bibi Gujri's mind was elevated and she started moving towards spiritual heights. Her soul too was in communion with God and she had developed a special relationship with the entire humanity. The marriage of Bibi Gujri and Tegh Bahadur had seemed to be a medium for the improvement of life after death; now time was imminent for a better deal in this material world. After the Guruship of seventeen years, Guru Har Rai Ji appointed Har Krishan as his successor; and when this child Guru was on his death bed he pointed towards 'Baba Bakala' for being the next Guru.

After the anointment, the Guru and Mata Gujri went to Amritsar to pay obeisance at Sri Harmandir Sahib. The Mahant of the Gurdwara shut the doors of Sri Harmandir Sahib and did not allow them to enter the holy place. The Guru and Mata Gujri stayed and rested for a while near the Akal Bunga.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji left Bakala and started towards the eastern states along with Mata Gujri and Mata Nanaki. The Guru visited Agra, Itawa, and Priyag on his missionary tour. While in Priyag, Mata Nanaki, the Guru's mother, approached him with a request of the highest importance. She said all her desires had been fulfilled, but there was yet one remaining. She remembered that her late husband, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji had promised that a great being should be in the house of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, and she was waiting for that event. The Guru remained for six months in Priyag, during which time his

wife Mata Gujri, to the great joy of his mother, became pregnant.¹ The Guru told his mother and wife to remain in Patna. On the birth of the child the Sikh Historian remarks: *'It hath ever been usual that, when God seeth His people suffering, He sendeth a saviour of the world.'* Guru Gobind Singh Ji afterwards, in his Bachitar Natak, described the circumstances of his birth. He was born three hours before sunrise on the seventh day of the light half of the month of Poh, on December 22, 1666, it is stated that on Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's departure to Assam with Raja Ram Singh, he directed his wife, Gujri to give the name Gobind Rai to a son who should be born to her in his absence.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji thoroughly understood the predicament of Brahmans, and decided to do something, but could not understand exactly what. He needed time to think, so he told the Brahmans to go and take some food and rest and come to him the next morning. The whole day passed off in brooding over the problem. In the evening the child Gobind Rai came back after his fun and frolic and was amazed to find his father in such unprecedented state of distress. He asked for the reason. The Guru explained the whole situation to him. Gobind Rai expressed his desire to find out what could be done to give solace to the troubled people. The Guru replied that there seemed to be just one way out; that some noble soul in an exalted position would have to go to Aurangzeb and point out to him the flaws in his policy towards the non-Muslims. If that fearless person was able to convince him the objective would be achieved. But if he failed in his mission he would have to pay for his audacity with his head. There was nothing short of this that could be done to save freedom of thought and expression in the Hindu religion. This act he said, would give a thorough jolt to the Mughal Empire and shake up its very roots. Gobind Rai

simply answered that who else, apart from the Guru himself was worthy of that task.

He sent for Kripa Ram and his associates and told them to convey to Aurangzeb that if he could convert Guru Tegh Bahadur to Islam, the Brahmans and the Hindus of Northern India would become Muslims. But the pre-condition was that all Brahmans in his captivity be set free the moment Guru courted arrest. The message was to him through the Subhedar of Lahore. Orders were issued at once to bring Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. All the followers of the Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji got ready to accompany him, but he selected only the leading five. He went to see his mother Mata Nanaki who gave him all the blessings in the world and told him to look after himself. If any harm came to him she said, her life would become an empty shell. Then he went to meet his wife Gujri and gave her the responsibility of looking after the Guru Darbar and supervising the education of the child. Mata Gujri instead wanted to accompany her husband. She wanted to share and bear his sufferings. How could he go alone, she argued? She was also a part of him, so why shouldn't she accompany him? But the Guru emphatically declined to do so, and Mata Gujri had to accept her husband's order as the will of God. She prayed "O my Guru husband, give us the strength to bear all this." The Guru's answer was that she would get all the strength and all the inspiration from her son. Then he told his chosen colleagues to help her in the mission assigned to her. He embraced his son and left.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji appeared before Aurangzeb in November 1675. He was told to accept the true faith, but the Guru refused. Then Aurangzeb demanded a miracle from him because he was reputed to be the Guru of India. The Guru refused to do this also because he felt that it was not the privilege of the mortals

to interfere with the workings of destiny. The inevitable came to pass. First, his companions were mercilessly butchered, and then the Guru was executed. The whole atmosphere got filled with tumultuous lamentations, screaming, and shrieking. A black dust storm rose in the sky, and the darkness engulfed the scene, and Bhai Jaita, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's disciple, fled to Anandpur with Guru's severed head for the last rites. Lakhi Shah went away with the body, and to save it from molestation by the Mughal employees, placed it in his own residence and set the house on fire. It is not hard to imagine the commotion in the Guru household when Bhai Jaita reached there. The sorrow and suffering of Mother Mata Nanaki and Mata Gujri were intense at the sight of the Guru's head without the torso. The tradition in this family was that whereas the joy of the House was to be shared with the public, the sorrow had to be borne alone. It was a private affair that the community could feel but not witness. The only expression given to this tragedy was that the will of God had to be accepted. Sands of time were running as usual. Mata Nanaki passed away, and the child Gobind Rai came of age and took over the workload from his mother. He became the tenth Guru and tied the two swords of 'Miri' and 'Piri', the symbols of the powers temporal and spiritual, around his waist. Guru Gobind Singh Ji married Jito and then Sundri. Mata Gujri whose joy knew no bounds; but again, her happiness became a target of cruel fate.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's differences with the hill chiefs had developed into skirmishes here and there, and in these sporadic battles they kept on being defeated. In 1699, on Vaisakhi Guru Gobind Singh Ji established the Khalsa Panth, and the jealous hill chiefs found a concrete excuse for provoking the Mughal rulers against the Guru. They said that Guru Gobind

Singh Ji was organising an army to challenge Aurangzeb's authority. The difficulties started mounting and deceitfully the Guru was forced to leave Anandpur. The moment he came out of his fort he had to face a severe, sharp attack, and in this battle Guru's two sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh were killed. In the confusion created by the need to cross the river Sirsa in the dark cold night, Mata Gujri was left alone with two younger Sahibzadas. Just at that time she met her old Brahman cook Gangu and felt relieved to get his assistance. But Gangu proved to be a traitor. He deprived Mata Gujri of all her valuables like gold coins and ornaments and then quietly informed the Subahdars about the whereabouts of the Guru family. Early in the morning, the Pathans came to capture the Guru's sons. A bullock cart was prepared, and in it sat Mata Gujri along with her grandchildren. The cart moved ahead toward Mata Gujri's ordeal and doom.

She knew what lay in store for them. On the way she kept on, instructing the boys on their mode of behaviour when they reached the destination. She told them to hold their faith close and dear to their hearts. She told them not to be intimidated by them, not to be tempted by any offer, and not to be afraid of torture or death. Be brave and strong like their grandfather. On their arrival, the court was held and when the children refused to budge from their own standpoints, they were both walled in alive. A wealthy Sikh, Todar Mal, rushed to the spot when he heard of the arrest of Guru's children to bail them out. But when he reached that place, it was already too late. He went to Mata Gujri to break news to her. He found her praying fervently for the safety of the children. Todar Mal's voice failed him, but on seeing him there in a state Mata Gujri became very anxious and asked him why her grandsons had not returned till then; what was happening

in the Mughal court, what questions were being put to the little children. Todar Mal steeled his heart and broke the news. She wailed, collapsed, and passed away.

Todar Mal went and requested Wazir Khan, the Subahdar of Sirhind to hand over the bodies of the children to enable the Sikhs to perform their last rites along with Mata Gujri. The Subahdar agreed but refused to allot land for this purpose. Todar Mal offered to pay any price for it. Wazir Khan then said that he could get as much as he could cover by gold coins. Todar Mal agreed to do it, and afterward, a Gurdwara was built on this site.

Thus, departed the soul of Mata Gujri who came to this world with unenviable luck to be born and married in families of distinction and with a fate that none would like to envy, a fate which inflicted untold misery on the lady devoted and dedicated to the value system of her family and her times.²

References:

- ¹ The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, Volumes III & IV, by Max Arthur Macauliffe. Publishers: Low Price Publications, New Delhi, India. 2008. Volume IV Page 344.
- ² M.K.Gill, The Guru Consorts, 1993.

Dr. Paramjit Kaur Virdee

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IS GOD ALWAYS WITH US? OR DO OUR SINS SEPARATE US FROM HIM? DOES GOD PUNISH US FOR OUR WRONGS, AND TAKE REVENGE FOR UNPARDONABLE SINS?

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor OBE

These statements always baffle the readers. Let us try to find the answer as per world scriptures.

First statement is that God is always with us, is it true?

“God is always with us and promises never to leave us nor forsake us.” The world scriptures assure us that God always stays with us through thick and thin.

The proof of the above statement, from the world scriptures, is as follows:

Guru Granth Sahib

Sikh scripture states that God is always with us and never leaves us.

1. Shabad example I:

ਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

My Master is always with me, near at hand.

ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Meditating in remembrance on Him, I cherish Him forever. ||1||rahau||

[SGGS page 394, Asa M5]

2. Shabad example II

ਹਰਿ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਸਾਰਿਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਰਬ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰੇ॥

The Master, the supreme Soul, is the creator of the universe; He is pervading and permeating everywhere, fully filling all spaces, and being with all of us at all times..

ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪੇ ਦਾ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਪਸਾਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਮਾਲਕ-ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸਭ ਜਗਾ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਸਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ ।

[GGS page 774, Suhi M4]

3. Shabad example III:

ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੈ ਕਿਥੈ ਮੈਨੋ ਲਏ ਛਡਾਈ ॥

That beloved Satguru (God) is always with me; wherever I may be, He will always save me.

ਉਹ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗ ਹੈ, ਸਭ ਥਾਈਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ (ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ) ਛਡਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ

[GGS page 588]

4 Shabad example IV:

ਏ ਮਨ ਮੇਰਿਆ ਤੂ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

O my mind, remain always with the Master

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਲਿ ਰਹੁ ਤੂ ਮੰਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਦੂਖ ਸਭਿ ਵਿਸਾਰਣਾ ॥

Remain always with the Master, O my mind, and all sufferings will be forgotten.

[GGS page 917, Ramkali M3]

Bible

1. Hymn example I

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." **Joshua 1:9**

Joshua confirms in Bible that God is always with us.

2. Hymn example II

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." **Isaiah 41:10**

Old Testament confirms that it is God's promise, never to forsake us

Joshua is best known as **Moses' second in command** who took over and led the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses' death.

Isaiah was a **Hebrew prophet** who was believed to have lived about 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy, Hebrew Devarim, ("**Words**"), fifth book of the Old Testament, written in the form of a farewell address by Moses to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land of Canaan.

Biblical scholars use the term Hebrews to designate the **descendants of the patriarchs** of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)—i.e., Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [Genesis 33:28])—from that period until their conquest of Canaan (Palestine) in the late 2nd millennium BC.

Qoran

Qoran teaches that Allah is always with us. The signs of feeling that we are in the presence of Allah, is to abstain from the sins, and to perform good deeds that will please Allah and He will never leave our hand.

1. Ayat example I

Indeed, Allah knows the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is seeing of what you do. He is always with you and never goes away. (Al-Hujurat 49:18)

Isaiah says that we need not to be frightened or dismayed, for God is always with us.

3. Hymn example III

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." **Deuteronomy 31:6**

Deuteronomy further sanctions that God will never leave us.

4. Hymn example IV

"God promises never to leave or forsake us." **Hebrews 13:5**

2. Ayat example II

"He created the heavens and earth in truth and formed you and perfected your forms; and to Him is the [final] destination. He is always around, and not far away." [**Quran 64:3**]

Qoran teaches that the final destination of every Muslim is Allah.

3. Ayat example III

"And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose, Allah is always with him. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent" [**Quran 65:3**]

Bhagvad Gita

"He who remembers me constantly and uninterruptedly, without any other thought, for that devotee who is ever absorbed in concentration, O Partha, I am easy to attain, and will always be with him." **Krishna in Bhagvad Gita**

Summary:

From the above quotes it is evident that God is always with us, and that He lives in, around and within us. As and when we call Him from our pure hearts He manifests in one form or another.

A deeper study of the scriptures also reveals many other truths about the Almighty. One of

them is that He can take any form, figure or personality to manifest and be with us. Another belief is that though God is present everywhere, He also has a permanent residence somewhere up above in the skies.

Sikhs call that residence as 'Sach Khand'. Yet another truth is that God is present at infinite number of places at the same time.

A further truth in many religions is that if we follow His Hukam (commandments) and do noble deeds (good Karmas), then, one day, when we leave this world, we will go to heaven and live with Him forever.

In Sikhism, in the Antim Ardas (last prayer) of a deceased, the Sikhs normally say, "God, give to the departed soul a place under your feet."

Many a times the omnipresent God, intentionally chooses to limit Himself to a physical human body to live amongst us. Further, He experiences the pains and joys of humanity, ultimately suffering in our place as a sacrifice for our sins. Examples of Jesus, Guru Arjan, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh and his entire family are proof enough for this statement.

All scriptures say in one voice, "Never hurt anyone. Your Master is always with you. O mortal being, God is your true friend. He is your benefactor. You can't run anywhere to get away from your Master-friend, He will find you."

The Second Statement is that God leaves us when we sin.

The Scriptures also state that God who has made a covenant with us not to leave us, does leave us when we do wrong and commit cardinal sins [This is an exception to the general rules of the covenant].

The proof of God's forsaking us in world scriptures is as follows:

Guru Granth Sahib

1. Shabad example I

ਤੁਧੁ ਆਪਿ ਵਿਛੋੜਿਆ ਆਪਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

You Yourself separate us from Yourself, and You Yourself reunite us again. ||1||

GGS page 11, 365, Sopurkh M4

2. Shabad example II

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

According to our own actions, some are drawn closer (for good karmas), and some are driven farther away (separation for bad karmas or sins).

GGS page 8, 146, Japji

3. Shabd example III

ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥

When it pleases the Master, He unites us with Himself.

ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਸਹਸਾ ਦੂਖੁ ਚੁਕਾਏ ॥

Through the Word of the Shabad, scepticism and suffering are dispelled.

GGs page 128, Maj M3

Bible – Second Testament

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46, KJV). This cry is a fulfilment of Psalm 22:1,

As Covid-19 spread throughout the world many religious groups said that God sent this disease as a punishment for global sins. Others said that it is Divine wrath (revenge) against our collective religious wrongs. Yet others said it is human error and not Divine punishment.

During Covid-19 mass deaths all over the known world, one of Guru Amardas's sloak in raga Bilaval became a daily recital in the Sikh Gurdwaras. In this sloak the Guru is appealing to the Almighty for the protection and well-being of the creation. Though Guru Amardas' hymn was written many hundred years ago, but its application is relevant even in today's dreadful calamity.

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੩ ॥

[SGGS page 853]

ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

The world is going up in flames - shower it with Your Mercy, O! Almighty God, and save the humanity.

Separation from God

Its consequences:

I. Punishment and revenge,

II. Sufferings and grief

Is God revengeful, and are revenge and punishment same in the realm of God? Does separation from God make us venerable to all sort of sorrows and pain?

One has to be careful and must differentiate between revenge and punishment; where revenge is the act or process of retaliation against or punishing someone for some kind of harm that they caused or wrongdoing that they did. The punishment is the infliction or imposition of a penalty as retribution for a wrong or offence. In the Divine realm, there is punishment for doing evil or sinful deeds but not any revenge.

ਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ! (ਵਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ) ਸੜ (ਜਿੱਥੇ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਮੌਤਾਂ ਰੋਜ਼ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ) ਰਹੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਬਚਾ ਲੈ,

ਜਿਤੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਉਬਰੈ ਤਿਤੈ ਲੈਹੁ ਉਬਾਰਿ ॥

Save it, and let it live, by whatever method it takes.

ਜਿਸ ਭੀ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਬਚ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਚਾ ਲੈ ।

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਵੇਖਾਲਿਆ ਸਚਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

The Satguru shows the way to peace, and it is the true Word.

ਸਚਾ-ਬਿਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ-ਸਾਲਾਹ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਾ ਕੇ (ਜਿਸ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ) ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ (ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦਾ) ਆਤਮਕ ਆਨੰਦ ਵਿਖਾਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ,

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਸੁਝਈ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਖਸਣਹਾਰੁ ॥੧॥

Let us not appeal to any other, except one universal Master, who is forever the forgiver of our sins and wrongs. ||1||

ਹੇ ਨਾਨਕ! ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਇਹ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ।੧।

I. Punishment or/and Revenge

Sikhism:

Let me illustrate this dilemma with examples from world scriptures:

1. Gurbani example I – God is not revengeful

The invocation (ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ) recorded at the start of Guru Granth Sahib emphatically confirms that God is not revengeful. The quote is:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Describing God's various attributes, Guru Nanak says that God is above enmity and is not revengeful. He is ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ॥

Sometimes the punishment of evil karmas can be harsh, but it is all according to the Divine Laws so written in the Divine law book.

Gurbani confirms this as follows:

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

We all have to live according to the Divine laws and these laws have already been written in Divine law books.||1||

[GGGS Page 1, Japji]

Whenever the people work against the Hukam, the Divine provisions of punishment are invoked

2. Gurbani example II – Sometimes Divine punishment is harsh

ਨਦਰਿ ਉਪਠੀ ਜੇ ਕਰੇ ਸੁਲਤਾਨਾ ਘਾਹੁ ਕਰਾਇਦਾ ॥

If it is a very wrong act, then the severest punishment, so written in the Divine law book, may be imposed. Thus kings (for their bad/evil deeds) may be transformed into poor grass cutters.

ਦਰਿ ਮੰਗਨਿ ਭਿਖ ਨ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥੧੬॥

Even though they may beg from door to door, no one will give them even a penny in charity. ||16||

[SGGS Page 472, Asa di Var M1]

3. Gurbani example III – Harsh punishment including whipping for bad karmas

ਪਉੜੀ ॥

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਭੋਗ ਭੋਗਿ ਕੈ ਹੋਇ ਭਸਮਤਿ ਭਉਰੁ ਸਿਧਾਇਆ ॥

Enjoying his pleasures, one is reduced to a pile of ashes, and the soul passes away.

ਵਡਾ ਹੋਆ ਦੁਨੀਦਾਰੁ ਗਲਿ ਸੰਗਲੁ ਘਤਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥

He may be great, but when he dies, the chain is thrown around his neck, (punishment for bad karmas) and he is led away.

ਅਗੈ ਕਰਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਵਾਚੀਐ ਬਹਿ ਲੇਖਾ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ॥

There, his good and bad deeds are added up; and his account is read.

ਬਾਉ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਪਉਦੀਈ ਹੁਣਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕਿਆ ਰੂਆਇਆ ॥

He is whipped, but finds no place of rest, and no one hears his cries of pain.

ਮਨਿ ਅੰਧੈ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥੩॥

O! blind man, this way you have wasted your life. ||3||

[SGGS page 464, Asa di Var M1]

4. Gurbani example IV

ਪਉੜੀ ॥

ਕਪੜੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਣਾ ਛਡਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜਾਵਣਾ ॥

Abandoning the world of beauty, and designer clothes, one must depart.

ਮੰਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਵਣਾ ॥

They obtain the rewards of their good and bad deeds.

Those who do very bad or evil deeds:

ਹੁਕਮ ਕੀਏ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵਦੇ ਰਾਹਿ ਭੀੜੈ ਅਗੈ ਜਾਵਣਾ ॥

They may issue whatever commands they wish (while in this world), but they shall have to take to the narrow and dark path hereafter on the way after death.

ਨੰਗਾ ਦੇਜਕਿ ਚਾਲਿਆ ਤਾ ਦਿਸੈ ਖਰਾ ਡਰਾਵਣਾ ॥

They go to hell naked, and look very hideous.

ਕਰਿ ਅਉਗਣ ਪਛੋਤਾਵਣਾ ॥੧੪॥

Then one regrets the sins he/she had committed, while living in this world. ||14||

[SGGS page 470, Asa di Var M1]

5. Gurbani example V

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੩ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਜਿਨੀ ਨ ਸੇਵਿਓ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

Those who do not serve the True Guru, and who do not contemplate the Word of the Shabad.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਨ ਆਇਓ ਮਿਰਤਕੁ ਹੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥

Spiritual wisdom does not enter into their hearts; they are like dead bodies in the world.

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਫੇਰੁ ਪਇਆ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੈ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

They go through the cycle of 8.4 million reincarnations, and they are ruined through death and rebirth.

[GGS page 88, Srirag Var M4, Sloak M3]

Hinduism:

Upapuranas

The decision to worship God or not to worship rests upon people at large. However, those who indulge in evil actions and cause suffering to others are not spared by God, since it is His universal function to uphold Dharma. He punishes the wicked according to the gravity of their deeds, actions and sins. All are individually judged and punished by Him. No wrongdoer is spared [An extract from UPA Puranas].

Bhagvad Gita 16.12

Those who are held in bondage by desires, and driven by lust and anger, they strive to accumulate wealth by unjust means. They do not even hesitate to adopt sinful and unlawful methods. Therefore, double punishment awaits them for their unethical conduct.

The Bhāgavatam states:

yāvad bhriyeta jatharam tāvāt svatvam hi dehinām

adhikam yo 'bhimanyeta sa steno dandam arhati (7.14.8)[v4]

“One is entitled to keep only as much wealth as is necessary for one’s maintenance (the rest must be given away in charity). If one accumulates more than one’s need, one is a thief in the eyes of God, and will be punished for it.”

The punishment for such a sinner is that, firstly, at the time of death, the wealth earned will not go along, it will be snatched away. Secondly, according to the law of karma, one will be punished for the sins committed in earning the wealth. Just as, if a smuggler is caught, not only are his goods confiscated, but he is also punished for breaking the law.

[Krishna in Bhagvad Gita]

Christianity:

1. Bible example I

The separation of God and man occurred when Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden. Their sin of disobedience caused all of humanity to be separated from God. (Genesis).

2. Bible example II

The universe God created was perfect. The human beings He made, in His own image, were perfect, until sin messed it all up and God distanced Himself from the sinners. (Genesis 1:27, 31; 3:1–24).

Islam:

1. Qoran example I

According to Qoran, God is merciful of His own accord, and God's wrath is the fate only of those, who, because of their own deeds and behaviour, have closed all doors of God's mercy and forgiveness upon themselves, and have committed serious sins. (Qoran)

2. Qoran example II

Qur'an **5:80** "You see many of them allying themselves with the unbelieving infidels. Vile indeed are their souls. They commit sins. Allah's wrath is on them, and in torment will they abide."

"Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness" [Quran 8:33]

The Third Statement is that different sins have different punishment.

Sinners are punished according to the Divine rules and the Separation from God is the most serious punishment which results in sorrows and pain.

1. Gurbani example I

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥

The record of good and bad deeds is read out in the presence of Dharamraj, the god of death, and the punishment is announced accordingly.

2. Gurbani example II

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

According to one's own actions (deeds, karmas) some are drawn closer, and some are driven farther away (separation) from God. [The farther one is, the more punitive is the punishment]

The world Scriptures indicate that God does view sins on their harshness and prescribes different punishments for them, depending upon their severity. These punishment are all written in the Divine law book, and a few scriptures illustrate them in detail. Bible is one of them.

About 600 years ago, **Pope Gregory I** compiled a list of seven deadly sins mentioned in **Bible**. They are pride, greed, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, and sloth.

Guru Granth Sahib also mentions a list of five sins. They are lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Though other sins like envy and sloth are also mentioned in many shabads, but to find them a thorough study of **Guru Granth Sahib** has to be made.

Pope Gregory also made a list of seven virtues: faith, hope, charity, justice, prudence, temperance, & perseverance. **Guru Granth Sahib** also endorses these virtues.

PUNISHMENT IN HELL
[As recorded in Bible]

The punishment in hell is in keeping with the Divine justice. The all-knowing God assesses each individual life, counting exactly the

extent and seriousness of the sin, and assigns punishment accordingly.

The Bible narrates in detail such punishments and also the demon associated with the punishment. There is no such detailed or individual punishment mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib or in other Sikh literature.

Lust (Kaam, ਕਾਮ)

Lust is a feeling of having a strong sexual desire for another person, and having sex against the will of such a person.

The punishment for Lust in hell is that the sinner will be suffocated by fire.

The name of the demon associated with lust is Azmodeus. He is king of demons.

Please note that pure love is primarily rooted in emotional, spiritual, and mental intimacy, while lust is primarily rooted in physical and sexual intimacy.

Anger (Krodh, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ)

Anger is defined as “a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.”

The punishment for Anger in hell is that the sinner will be dismembered. The name of the demon associated with anger is Satan. He is **rebel angel, who opposes God.**

Emotional Attachment (ਮੋਹ)

Emotional **attachment** is the tendency to cling to people, beliefs, habits, possessions and circumstances, and the refusal to let go and try new things.

Where love (ਪਿਆਰ) is a **positive feeling** toward something or somebody, the attachment (ਮੋਹ) is an **emotional need** for something or somebody.

Greed (Lobh, ਲੋਭ)

Greed is selfish and excessive desire for more of something (such as money) than is needed, motivated by naked ambition and desire.

Punishment of Greed in hell is boiling in oil

The name of the demon associated with greed is Mammon.

Pride (ਹੰਕਾਰ, ਅਹੰਕਾਰ)

Pride is a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority.

The punishment for the Sin of Pride in hell is that sinner will be broken.

The demon associated with this sin is Lucifer. Lucifer was **an angel of God who turned against his creator and was exiled from the heavens.** He is now more commonly known as Satan and rules over the souls banished to hell for all of eternity.

Envy (ਈਰਖਾ)

Envy or Jealousy is a desire to own what others have.

The punishment for Envy in hell is that the sinner will be immersed in cold water.

The name of the demon associated with envy is Leviathan.

Gluttony (ਪੇਟੂਪਨ)

In its broader meaning, it includes trying to consume anything more than you need, including food.

The punishment for Gluttony in hell is that the sinner will be forcibly fed.

The name of the demon associated with gluttony is Beelzebub. **Beelzebub** is the Lieutenant of Lucifer and is one of the most loyal to the Morning Star. **Beelzebub** is commonly described as ranking high in the hierarchy of Hell.

Sloth (ਯਾਲਸ)

Sloth refers to reluctance to work or making an effort. It is pure laziness or lethargy.

The punishment for the Sin of Sloth in hell is that the sinner will be thrown into snake pit

The name of the demon associated with Sloth is Belphegor. **Belphegor is a lieutenant from Hell, mentioned multiple times** in the Bible, who had been dispatched to Earth on a mission by Satan.

The Seven Virtues that can cure these seven deadly sins

Guru Granth Sahib and other world scriptures mention the following 7 virtues and how they cure the sins:

Chastity heals lust; Patience cures Anger; Charity cures Greed; Detachment cures Attachment; Humility cures Pride; Kindness cures Envy; Temperance (restraint) cures Gluttony.

S.No	Virtue	Cure to the Seven Deadly Sins
1	Kindness	Cures <i>envy</i> by placing the desire to help others above the need to supersede them.
2	Temperance (Restraint)	Cures <i>gluttony</i> by implanting the desire to be healthy, therefore making one fit to serve others.
3	Charity	Cures <i>greed</i> by putting the desire to help others above storing up treasure for one's self.
4	Chastity	Cures <i>lust</i> by controlling passion and leveraging that energy for the good of others.
5	Humility	Cures <i>pride</i> by removing one's ego and boastfulness, therefore allowing the attitude of service.
6	Diligence	Cures <i>slothfulness</i> by placing the best interest of others above the life of ease and relaxation.
7	Patience	Cures <i>anger</i> by taking time to understand the needs and desires of others before acting or speaking.

II. The Sufferings

Punishment while we are alive

Many religious scriptures also quote that God punishes people in this life for their universal wrongs through natural disasters e.g., earthquakes, floods, volcanos, tsunamis, famines, cloud bursts, epidemics, pandemics, cancer, severe disabilities and other terminal ailments etc.

We all must understand that God does not punish His believers, without a reason. We just need to pray and do our duty and let God show us, in His own way, the reason as to why we are suffering.

When we, as believers, are in agony and crying with pain, this does not mean we are being punished unless we have committed sins and seriously gone against God's Hukam (Command).

All we need to do is believe and trust in God. Our faith must not waver and should remain strong and resilient even in calamities.

Guru Granth Sahib supports it:

ਜੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਤ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਅਰਾਧੀ ਦੁਖਿ ਭੀ ਤੁਝੈ ਧਿਆਈ ॥੨॥

If You bless me with happiness, then I, surely, worship and adore You. But even in pain, I believe in you and meditate on You. ||2||

ਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ! (ਮੇਹਰ ਕਰ) ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸੁਖ ਦੇਵੇਂ, ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਹੀ
ਸਿਮਰਦਾ ਰਹਾਂ, ਦੁਖ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਹੀ ਆਰਾਧਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ
ਰਹਾਂ ।੨।

[Raga Suhi M4, page 757]

*We must not sit and cry out in a dark corner
while hoping for something to change our
situation. We have to go out and do our part
so that God comes to correct the situation.*

Guru Granth Sahib says:

ਦੁਇ ਕਰ ਜੋੜਿ ਕਰੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

With my palms pressed together, I offer my
prayer.

ਚਰਨ ਪਖਾਰਿ ਕਹਾਂ ਗੁਣਤਾਸ ॥

I wash the holy feet, and recite the praises of the
Master, the treasure of virtue.

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦਇਆਲ ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਹਜੂਰਿ ॥

O God, merciful and compassionate, let me
remain in Your presence.

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜੀਵੈ ਸੰਤਾ ਧੂਰਿ ॥੪॥੨॥੨੩॥

Nanak lives, in the dust of the Saints. ॥4॥2॥23॥

[Raga Dhanasri M5, page 676]

Whenever we think God is punishing us, just fold
our hands, kneel down and ask Him how we are
supposed to learn. Let His life-force (our soul) guide
us through hard times and we realise that it was
God's way of disciplining us but not punishment.

Sometimes, God also won't help us because our
intentions are bad and will harm other people. We
need to have pure thoughts that are free from hurting
others. Our evil thoughts will always destroy the
good relationship we have with the Almighty.

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor OBE

Vice Chancellor, World Sikh University London

★★★



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INTERPRETING THE SHABAD THROUGH “SABH GOBIND HAI” IDEOLOGY – THE IDEOLOGY OF NON DUALITY

Dr. Navtej Singh

Abstract

There are various websites that interpret and translate the Shabad (the Divine Word) contained in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS), into English, with contradictory meanings. If Shabad is interpreted consistently and the ideology of the SGGS followed, then it follows that no contradictions should occur. However, this consistent interpretation requires an in depth understanding of the underlying philosophy embedded in compositions included in the SGGS. Once the philosophy included in one composition is understood, then this philosophy will appear consistently in the SGGS without any contradictions.

This paper shows that “Sabh Gobind Hai” – (Everything is God) is at the heart of the underlying philosophy promulgated by the writers of the SGGS.

Necessity for Scripture and Ideology

The followers of the Sikh faith had grown substantially by mid-16th century. During the lives of first four Gurus, there were challengers for who would most likely become the next Guru. In order to entice Sikh followers to them, some of these challengers started to write their own ‘*scriptures*’ and compositions. The fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Devji felt that because critical mass had already been established by then, there was a need for a central place of worship that Sikhs could feel proud of and from where important edicts could be communicated. Hence, with the help of the Sikh congregation, the Guru built Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar or, what is today

popularly known as the ‘*Golden Temple*’. The Guru also sought to standardise and introduce Sikh scripture that reflected Sikh ideology as promoted by the first four Gurus. This was to ensure that this ideology, was not only preserved in a sacred scripture, but also prevented other challengers from communicating their own writings and stopped them from calling themselves successors to the ‘*Guru*’ throne.

In his book, Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli alludes to this pressure and states that, as an example, Guru Arjan’s elder brother, Prithichand, was not only trying to compose his own hymns but was trying to get hold of compositions of Guru Nanak and the other previous Gurus so that he could be recognised as the next Guru. In addition, Prithichand’s son Meharbaan, perhaps with instructions from his father, was doing the same and was writing scripture under the heading ‘*Mehla 6*’, meaning sixth Guru, proclaiming himself to be the next Guru.¹

To put a stop to this dilution and fragmentation of the Sikh faith, Guru Arjan collected the writings of the first four Gurus, including Bhagat bani and compiled them into the Kartarpuri Bir. The Guru not only included compositions that met Sikh ideology but introduced a sophisticated numbering system to prevent deletion or addition of unapproved compositions. To get some appreciation of the challenges he was facing, a great deal of representation was being made to Guru Arjan to include certain compositions by writers other than the 35 included at the time, excluding Guru Tegh Bahadur, who came much later. Guru Arjan did not succumb to this pressure and only included those compositions

that met Sikh ideology. In my view, oneness of God (Ik Ong Kaar) or “Sabh Gobind Hai” is the crux of this ideology. As an illustration of attempts being made to include unauthorised compositions, Guru Arjan sent a trusted devotee, Bhai Banno, to Lahore, in 1604, from Ramsar, where the Kartarpuri Bir had been compiled, to secure a bound version of the Bir. When Bhai Banno returned from Lahore with the bound copy and delivered it to Guru Arjan, the Guru found that even during this short space of time, unauthorised hymns had secretly been included in the Bir. These hymns included writings that did not match Sikh ideology. These authors included Mira Bai, non-ideological hymns from Kabir, Surdas and other non-authentic hymns written in the name of Guru Nanak.

Guru Arjan disowned this Bir and called it *Khari Bir*, possibly because Bhai Banno hailed from a village called Khara or perhaps Khari Bir, which implied ‘*Forbidden copy*.’²

The rules of Shabad interpretation

In his book, Dr D.P. Singh, advises that there is a dire need for SGGGS Hermeneutics – a science of properly interpreting the various compositions recorded in the sacred SGGGS.³ D.P. Singh says that two ‘*Laws*’ must be followed in interpreting scripture.

“The **first important Law of Gurbani (Divine Word) Hermeneutics** is that the SGGGS should be interpreted literally. This means understanding the Divine Word in its plain meaning. This keeps us faithful to the intended meaning of the Divine Word and away from allegorising and symbolising verses that are designed to be understood literally.”

D.P. Singh says that “the **second important Law of Gurbani (Divine Word) Hermeneutics** is that a verse or passage must be interpreted Historically, Grammatically, and contextually. Historic interpretation refers to understanding the culture, background and situation which prompted the text.

The Grammatical interpretation means recognition of the rules of grammar, nuances of the various languages and applying these principles to the understanding of a passage.

The Contextual interpretation involves looking at the context of the surrounding verse or passage, in order to determine the actual meaning.”

D.P. Singh advises that as human beings, we have developed different principles and ‘*schools*’ for interpreting Gurbani, the Sacred Word of God. In his book, DP Singh mentions four schools in existence currently that interpret the Sacred Word of God according to their thinking. These schools are each have various scholars who support their views.

A) *The Allegorical School of interpretation* which believes that hidden in each sentence is a symbolic spiritual meaning.

B) *The Devotional school of interpretation* which emphasises the goal of developing one’s spiritual life and reading scripture as a means of obtaining a mystical experience.

C) *The Literal school of interpretation* which uses a literal method of accepting and translating each sentence literally. Many scholars with a scientific bent of mind are supporters of this school.

D) *The Liberal school of interpretation* who do appear to accept the Sacred Word of God as the infallible ‘*Guru*’ and reject the divine inspiration of the Divine Word.”⁴

Separately, in his book, Dr Karminder Singh,⁵ goes further and uses a Gurbani Framework of ten principles to interpret Shabad. These ten principles are (i) Crossing over from the Literal interpretation to the Spiritual; (ii) The Rahao principle meaning; (iii) Context of Shabd; (iv) Inner Rationality i.e. interpreted from within the 1430 pages of the SGGGS; (v) Conceptual consistency i.e. no contradictions; (vi) First person interpretation i.e. interpreted as experienced by

the writer himself; (vii) Spirituality of the Shabd, i.e. spirituality of Sikhi is based on the Shabd; (viii) Spirituality realising the Creator Within; (ix) Spirituality of the being comes from within the Self, not an external God; (x) using Gurbani to understand Gurbani.

A structured approach as noted by both these scholars not only minimises any contradictory interpretations but also ensures consistency of spiritual understanding and application of such spirituality. In my personal view, we must start with the underlying premise that when Guru Arjan compiled the Adi Granth, he did not create or intend to create any contradictions in the compositions he selected for inclusion in this holy scripture. The criteria for inclusion were strict based on meeting a certain ideology. This ideology can be, in my view, be summarised as “Sabh Gobind Hai” (Everything is God).

Sabh Gobind Hai Philosophy

The philosophy of “Sabh Gobind Hai” is not an easy concept to grasp because, as Beings, we have been conditioned for many years to look upon things around us with duality in mind. We perceive things as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘beautiful’ or ‘ugly’ and so on.

An analogy about this perceived duality can be explained as follows: Imagine an infinite ocean (God) and that every drop of water in this infinite ocean represents billions and billions of ‘Beings’. ‘Separation’ from God can be thought of as icebergs that form in this infinite ocean. In reality, these icebergs are no different from the ocean; they have the same characteristics and properties as the ocean. However, metaphorically, the icebergs, like the Self, perceive themselves to be separate and different because of Maya. As, and when the rays of the sun shine on these icebergs and they melt, they become part of the ocean again; in essence, they were never really separate from the ocean. In a similar way, the Self only perceives separation from the Absolute Reality but is never really separated from this Reality because its properties are not different.

The English translation of “Sabh Gobind Hai” itself can lead to contradiction. Translation 1 of this line is “God is Everything” and the Translation 2 is “Everything is God”. Whilst appearing to seem the same, the spiritual message implied by both is entirely different when interpreted according to the philosophy set out in the SGGS. Translation 1 implies that whilst “God is Everything”, God is/ can be a separate entity from the human being/ Self. Translation 2 is clearer in this regard and implies that “Everything is God” and that whilst Everything is God, there is nothing else but God. There is no ‘Me’ or ‘You’. This line “Sabh Gobind Hai” comes from a shabad by Bhagat Namdev in Raag Asa⁶.

In this composition, it becomes clear that Translation 1 and the implication that God is a separate entity from the Self will lead to a contradictory translation of this Shabad. Some websites have interpreted this line as Translation 1. In fact, it is Translation 2 that is relevant in translating this composition (see text highlighted in the Shabad below). Following the rules noted by Dr D.P. Singh and Dr Karminder Singh, the Rahao line in the below composition points out that God, although having no gender, is an integral part of His creation (of which the human being or Self is also a part), to the point that He is woven into His creation like a necklace that is held together by a thread. The next line in the composition makes it crystal clear that God and His creation are inseparable like a wave and (the bubbles within), neither of which are separate from the ocean. Hence the line “Sabh Gobind Hai” in this composition means that Everything is God and not that “God is Everything”. The composition also makes it clear that it is the influence of Maya that causes a perception of the Self’s separation from God. Bhagat Namdev implies that once we understand Maya and can subdue this Maya, then we find that “*This manifested world is the playful game of the Supreme God; reflecting upon it, we find that it is not different from Him.*” This further enforces the message that “Everything is God”.

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ikoaṅkār satgur parsād.

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of
The True Guru:

ਆਸਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਕੀ

Āsā banī Sīrī Nāmdeō jī kī

Aasaa, The Word Of The Reverend Naam Devji:

ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਬਿਆਪਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਜਤ ਦੇਖਓ ਤਤ ਸੋਈ ॥

Ēk anek biāpak pūrak jat dekḥau taṭ soī.

In the one and in the many, He is pervading and
permeating; wherever I look, there He is.

ਮਾਇਆ ਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਬਿਮੋਹਿਤ ਬਿਰਲਾ ਬੁਝੈ ਕੋਈ ॥੧॥

Māiā chīṭar bachīṭar bimohiṭ birlā būjḥai koī. ||1||

The marvellous image of Maya is so fascinating
(that it gives the perception of separation) ; only
a few understand this. ||1||

ਸਭ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਿ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਹੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਿ ਹੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਿ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ ॥

Sabh gobind hai sabh gobind hai gobind bin
nahī koī.

God is everything, God is everything. Without
God, there is nothing at all.

ਸੁਤ ਏਕ ਮਣਿ ਸਤ ਸਹੰਸ ਜਸ ਜੈਸੇ ਓਤਿ ਪੋਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸੋਈ
॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Sūt ek maṅ saṭ sahaṅs jaise oṭ poṭ parabh soī.
||1|| rahāo.

As one thread holds hundreds and thousands of
beads, He is woven into His creation. ||1||Pause||

ਜਲ ਤਰੰਗ ਅਰ ਫੇਨ ਬੁਦਬੁਦਾ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਭਿੰਨ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

Jal tarang ar fen budbudā jal te bhinn na hoī.

The waves of the water, the foam and bubbles,
are not distinct from the water.

ਇਹ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਲੀਲਾ ਨਿਚਰਤ ਆਨ ਨ
ਹੋਈ ॥੨॥

Ih parpanch pārbarahm kī līlā bichraṭ ān na
hoī. ||2||

This manifested world is the playful game of the
Supreme God; reflecting upon it, we find that it
is not different from Him. ||2||

ਮਿਥਿਆ ਭਰਮ ਅਰ ਸਪਨ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਸਤਿ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

Mithiā bharam ar supan manorath saṭ padārath
jāniā.

False doubts and dream objects - man believes
them to be true.

ਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਮਨਸਾ ਗੁਰ ਓਪਦੇਸੀ ਜਾਗਤ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥੩॥

Sukriṭ mansā gur opdesī jāgaṭ hī man māniā. ||3||

The Guru has instructed me to try to do good deeds,
and my awakened mind has accepted this. ||3||

ਕਹਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਓ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇਖਹ ਰਿਦੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥

Kahaṭ nāmdeō har kī rachnā dekḥhu ridai
bīchārī.

Says Naam Dev, see the Creation of the Supreme
God, and reflect upon it in your heart.

ਘਟ ਘਟ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਏਕ ਮਰਾਰੀ
॥੪॥੧॥

Ghat ghat antar sarab niranṭar keval ek
murārī. ||4||1||

In each and every heart, and deep within the
very nucleus of all, is the One God. ||4||1||⁷

Most importantly, now that the philosophy
of Sabh Gobind has been understood from
this composition, we can see evidence of this
philosophy elsewhere in SGGS without causing
any contradictions.

**Ik Ong Kaar – The core message of “Sabh
Gobind Hai” or non-dual ideology.**

There are 31 Raag Chapters in the SGGS. A
Raag is a musical structure or set of rules of
how to build a melody. The SGGS is structured
in this manner because the compositions therein
can be recited or sung in musical form.

Each Raag Chapter starts with the words ੴ (*Ik
Ong Kaar*). *Ik Ong Kaar* immediately informs
the reader that the contents of every Chapter
must be approached and read from a “Sabh
Gobind Hai” or non-dualistic perspective. This
means that when these compositions are recited,
there should be a realisation that there is no ‘Me’
or the Self nor is there a separate God or ‘He’ in

the SGGS. There is only God, and Everything is God. How do we explain this? In reality, the first line of the SGGS, **Ik Ong Kaar** can be translated and explained as follows:

Ong describes the attributes of God that are not visible to the Self and are formless. These attributes are also referred to as Nirgun, the formless or Transcendent attributes of God. God is referred to as Nirankaar in the SGGS (The Formless One). Other adjectives used to describe the formless attributes of God as described in the Mool Mantar below include *Nirbhau (Fearless)*, *NirVair (without Hate)*, *Akal Murat (Immortal)*, *Ajuni (beyond Death and Rebirth)*, *Saibhang (Self illuminated)*.

Kaar comes from the Sanskrit word '*Akaar*' which means attributes relating to '*Form or Shape*'. In the SGGS, these are described as the Sargun attributes of God; those attributes which are visible to the Self. Essentially, this is the manifested or Immanent part of the same unmanifested God. The entire visible universe and nature represents the Sargun aspects of God. Bhagat Namdev states in Raag Asa:

ਇਹ ਪਰਪੰਚ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਲੀਲਾ ਬਿਚਰਤ ਆਨ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
Ih parpanch pābarahm kī līlā bichrat ān na hoī. ||2||

This **manifested** world is the playful game of Supreme God; reflecting upon it, we find that it is not different from Him. ||2||⁸

By adding '**Ik**' in front of '**Ong Kaar**' in every Raag Chapter, in the opening line of the SGGS, Guru Nanak makes it perfectly clear that God in His unmanifested Formless state and His visible manifested state, which includes all mankind, living and non-living things which can be seen in the created world, is One. He is One but has many forms, including the Self. Guru Nanak wants to make us aware that there is only God and nothing else. Every composition thereafter the invocation 'Ik Ong Kaar' should be read from a "Sabh Gobind Hai" or non-dualistic perspective. This is the philosophy followed by Guru Arjan when he compiled the first recension

of the SGGS, then known as the *Adi Granth* and this was the criteria he required in his careful selection of what compositions to include.

Conclusion

Based on the 'Ik Ong Kaar' ideology, in my opinion, it becomes apparent, that "Sabh Gobind Hai" is how Guru Nanak Devji and the other 35 writers of the SGGS intended their compositions to be interpreted. This is regardless of how various schools, as explained by Dr D.P. Singh above, have been and are currently interpreting Gurbani, the Sacred Word of God. I present another composition below which, in my view, if explained dualistically, creates contradictions when other shabads are translated.

In the below composition in SriRaag, Guru Nanak Devji states, in the Rahao line, that God is permeating and pervading all. Dualistically, this could imply that God is sitting '*separate*' from His creation, permeating all. The fact that He is not '*separate*' is pointed by Guru Nanak Devji in next few lines later where the Guru advises that "He Himself is the fisherman and the fish; He Himself is the water and the net"; He Himself is the sinker, and He Himself is the bait". Guru Nanak Devji concludes with "He Himself is the lotus flower of the day and He Himself the waterlily of the night. He Himself beholds them and blossoms forth in bliss."

Another question that may come up is the following: How can the fisherman's net be God? The fisherman and the fish can be considered to have a '*Soul*' and hence can have '*God*' in them but how can the net have a '*Soul*'? The reason why we cannot comprehend this is because we have a preconceived notion about what God is and what God should like.

The answer to the above question is that the common denominator for all three, the fisherman, the fish and the net is energy. Universal God can be viewed as source energy. This energy makes up the fisherman, the fish and the net. All three are God's created energy and, therefore,

by definition, God. All energy in the universe is God created and is God. If we interpret the composition in this manner, then there is no apparent contradiction.

ਆਪੇ ਰਸੀਆ ਆਪਿ ਰਸ ਆਪੇ ਰਾਵਣਹਾਰ ॥

Āpe rasīā āp ras āpe ravanḥār.

He Himself is the Enjoyer, and He Himself is the Enjoyment. He Himself is the enchanter of all.

ਆਪੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਚੋਲੜਾ ਆਪੇ ਸੇਜ ਭਤਾਰ ॥੧॥

Āpe hovai chōlṛā āpe sej bhātār. ||1||

He Himself is the Bride in her dress, He Himself is the Bridegroom. ||1||

ਰੰਗਿ ਰਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Rang ratā merā sāhib rav rahiā bharpūr. ||1|| rahāo.

My Master is imbued with love; He is totally permeating and pervading all. ||1||Rahao||

ਆਪੇ ਮਾਛੀ ਮਛਲੀ ਆਪੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਜਾਲ ॥

Āpe māchhī machhulī āpe pāṇī jāl.

He Himself is the fisherman and the fish; He Himself is the water and the net.

ਆਪੇ ਜਾਲ ਮਣਕੜਾ ਆਪੇ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਲਾਲ ॥੨॥

Āpe jāl maṅkarā āpe andar lāl. ||2||

He Himself is the sinker, and He Himself is the bait. ||2||

ਆਪੇ ਬਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੰਗਲਾ ਸਖੀਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਲਾਲ ॥

Āpe baho bidh rangulā sakhīe merā lāl.

He Himself loves in so many ways. O sister soul-brides, He is my Beloved.

ਨਿਤ ਰਵੈ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਦੇਖ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਹਾਲ ॥੩॥

Niṭ ravai sohāgaṇī dekḥ hamārā hāl. ||3||

He continually enchants the happy soul-brides; just look at the plight I am in without Him! ||3||

ਪ੍ਰਣਵੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੂ ਸਰਵਰ ਤੂ ਹੰਸ ॥

Paraṇvai Nānak bentī tū sarvar tū hans.

Prays Nanak, please hear my prayer: You are the pool, and You are the soul-swan.

ਕਠਲ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਕਵੀਆ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖਿ ਵਿਗਸ ॥੪॥੨੫॥

Kaul tū hai kavīā tū hai āpe vekḥ vigas. ||4||25||

You are the lotus flower of the day and You are the waterlily of the night. You Yourself behold them and blossom forth in bliss. ||4||25||⁹

This paper has sought to show that interpreting the Shabad requires a certain ideology to be followed and should be done following certain rules and guidelines. If the ideology is not followed, then this can create contradictions which leave a number of unanswered questions in the reader's mind. This was not Guru Nanak Devji's nor Guru Arjan Devji's intention when they compiled these shabads. In Raag Parbhati, Guru Amar Dasji says that it is the "Virla" or Rare being who grasps the essence and realises that merging with and realising God can be attained (anytime) through the Shabad (Divine Word)¹⁰. Having said this, reading, understanding and application of shabad is a personal journey and is each person's individual experiment with faith. This paper merely provides a torch or flashlight for this journey, a journey that has got dark pathways and propensity to lose one's path.

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Dr. Navtej Singh

★★★

THE TEACHING OF GURU NANAK

Prof. Harbans Singh

I (ikk) oankar satinamu karta purakhu nirbhau nirvairu akal murat ajuni saibhang gurprasadi.

These opening lines of Guru Nanak's **Japuji** are called Mul Mantra or the root formula. They contain the kernel of his teaching. In a free English rendering, the Mul Mantra would mean: 1 (One) Absolute Being. The figure T proclaims His existence as well as His unicity. His name? Call Him sat, for He is, He is truth eternal. He is the creator of all things. Yet He does not remain apart from His creation. He is the pervasive Person. Since He is the creator of everything, He is without fear. He is without rancour. He is not limited by time. Yet He is the one form that exists. He is not subject to birth and decay. He is perennially self-existent. He can be realized only through the grace of the Guru.

This is the essence of Guru Nanak's revelation of the character of God. This statement about the Divine is the foundation of the Sikh faith. On this view of the Absolute is based the doctrine of Guru Nanak. Belief in One God is the first principle. God is eternal, infinite and all-pervasive — the ultimate ground of all that exists. He is the creator of all men and of all things. He is the source of grace and love. To love Him and become worthy of His grace should be the aim of all men. In sublime Punjabi poetry, Guru Nanak has sung praises of God as defined in the Mul Mantra. All of his hymns are preserved in the Guru Granth. From these, men have come to know God more fully.

Guru Nanak teaches the oneness of God. He calls God simply **ikk** (One) without a second. Yet God is not abstract or impersonal. He has personal attributes. He is Himself conscious and the source of all consciousness. "There is light

in all and that light is He. Through this light everything is illuminated." In this sense, Guru Nanak's teaching was monotheistic, not monistic. God is* One, but what He has created has reality. He responds to the devotion of the humblest being. God is both **nirguna** and **sarguna**, i.e. He is without attributes as well as with attributes. Yet He is formless. He is never incarnated, nor can any image contain Him. God pervades His entire creation. But He is not limited to it. Nor is He identical with it.

The unity of God implies the equality of men. Guru Nanak overruled divisions among men on the grounds of birth, caste or country. To make distinctions among them was sinful. "All men are God's own creation," said Guru Nanak. "False is caste and false are worldly titles. One Supreme Lord sustains all." "Know men by their worth. Do not ask their caste. There is no caste in the next world." "Neither caste nor birth will be enquired..." Guru Nanak also said that women were not to be treated as inferior. Among his followers, they were given full equality with men.

The entire creation depends on **hukm**, i.e. God's Will. This **hukm** is the principle of all life. This creation is the outcome of the Will of the Conscious Being. He is the first cause. Guru Nanak makes no further attempt at surmising how and when this universe was created. "No one knows the hour or the day, the season or the month of its origin. Only the Creator who made the world knows when He made it... And there are countless worlds and regions beyond the skies and below." In another **sabad**, Guru Nanak says, "For many, many ages complete darkness reigned everywhere. There were no worlds, nor the sun, nor the moon. The Will of the Lord alone reigned. This universe came into being when He willed to manifest Himself."

Hukm is the fundamental principle of God's activity; thus it is the principle of all activity. Guru Nanak often used the names of God found in the Hindu and Muslim traditions. But he always understood them as descriptive of **hukm**. Man's duty is to seek an understanding of the Divine **hukm** and to live his life wholly in accord with it. This is the way to break the wall of falsehood. "Walk with **hukm** (the Divine Will) as your guide," says Guru Nanak. Divine Reality sustains this world. Along with this was recognized the permanence of the human soul. Man is more than the body. What gives the body consciousness is the spark of divinity in it. The individual soul is part of the Divine as the spark is part of the fire. It lasts even after the destruction of the body.

What are the causes of man's bondage? The primary one is his egoism (**haumai**). This is what separates man from the Primal Reality and dims the divine spark within him. This is what hampers human understanding. Egoism or self-concern creates a wall around the individual and separates him from his original source. This is what leads to spiritual blindness or nescience (**agian, ajnana**). One becomes alienated from the Universal Will and mistakes what is unreal, the **samsara**, for the real. One is ruled by one's passions and instincts and cannot break loose from the stranglehold of the five evils, i.e. **Kama** (sensuality), **Krodha** (anger), **Lobha** (avarice), **nioha** (attachment), and **ahankara** (pride). Egoity runs counter to divinity. The ego-ridden person is the **manmukh**, unregenerate man, self-centered and self-willed, who is led by his wayward mind. **Haumai** is the cause of all suffering. By overcoming **haumai** is the truth realized. This is the way to achieve union with the Eternal One. Attainment of union with Eternal One is the ultimate purpose of man. This, according to Guru Nanak, is **mukti**, final release or liberation. Thus is the cycle of death and rebirth is ended.

How can **haumai**, the finite ego or self-love, be overcome? Guru Nanak has prescribed no austerities or penances. He in fact rejected all

outward forms of piety. He said that pilgrimages, fasts and ascetic practices were of no avail. The first step towards enlightenment is the awakening that the Transcendent is the only ultimate truth. This awakening must be accompanied by an intense love of God, utter self-surrender to Him and complete faith in his **hukm** or Will. Thus one realizes the reality and frees oneself from the bondage of ego.

Hukm is not arbitrary. It works according to its own fixed laws. There is also room in it for **nadar**. **Nadar** is the Eternal One's grace. By God's grace man finally realizes the truth and liberates himself. Grace is manifested through God's word — through the Guru. Through God's grace one reaches the goal. This divine favour is the final arbiter. Without it no spiritual advantage can accrue.

Guru Nanak taught that devotion was **more** important than religious practices. Devout love was set forth as the truest virtue — the fundamental disposition for one seeking liberation. By immersing oneself in **nam**, i.e. by constant remembrance of the Divine Name, one attained **moksha** or **mukti**. This was freedom from **haumai**, from self-bondage, from the circuit of birth, death and rebirth. Life in this world is conditioned. Temporality is an essential trait of human existence. One could go beyond this contingent state, could transcend **samsara** — the sphere of temporality, the finite world of repeated becoming — by concentrating on **nam**. By devotion and absorption in **nam**, one gains control of the mind and evolves a one-pointed awareness of the Absolute Being. **Nam-simran (smarana)** is the highest spiritual value. It is the discipline of concentrating on the Divine Personality. It is the loving remembrance of **His** Name, the practice of Sati Nam. In this sacred calling lies man's real worth. Man's greatness (**vadiai**), his honour (**pat**), his destiny (**gati**) and his wealth of gems (**ratandhan**) all proceed from and reach their climax in his love of and friendship with God. All moral and spiritual virtues spring from his sovereign act of devotion

to God. All moral and spiritual virtues spring from this sovereign act of devotion to God.

Religious practices become efficacious only when **nam**, pervades them. Without **nam**, one is dominated by **haumai**. Through the practice of **nam**, one becomes aware of God's presence and gets into harmony with His Will. Thus one ascends to higher levels of consciousness. This discipline is born of meditation on the Divine Name. The Divine Name is indicated by the Guru. This meditation is no mere mystical recitation. It is the active realization of **nam** as the motivating force in all of God's creation. When one is attuned to **nam**, one's life is changed. One becomes absorbed in God. Thus does man realize his real nature and merges back into the Light. This potentiality which men possess to become God-like gives meaning and dignity to human existence.

The Guru is a vital link in man's spiritual progress. He is the teacher who shows the way. He is not an intercessor, but exemplar and guide. He is no **avatar** or God's incarnation. Through him God instructs his creatures. The Guru is the perfectly realized soul. At the same time he is capable of leading the believer to the highest state of spiritual realization. The Guru has been called the ladder, the raft, the rowboat by means of which one reaches God. He is the revealer of God's word. Through him the word or **sabad** enters human history. The Guru is the voice of God. He is the divine self-expression. Man turns to the Guru for instruction because of his wisdom and his moral piety. He indicates the path to liberation. It is the Guru who brings the love and nature of God to believer. It is He who brings that grace of God by which **haumain** is mastered. The Guru is witness to God's love of His creation. He is God's **hukm** made concrete.

In the Sikh tradition, a special figure is used to describe the transfer of the Guruship. This figure helps us to understand the true nature of the Guru. The Guruship passes from one Guru to the other as one candle lights another. Thus

the real Guru is God, for He is the source of all light. It is clear that we are not to confuse the Guru with the human form (the unlit candle). In the Sikh faith, which originated in Guru Nanak's teaching, ten Gurus held the office. The last of the Gurus passed it on to the Sacred Book, the Guru Granth. The Guru is so central to the Sikh way of life that the tradition itself has been called the path of discipleship.

Guru Nanak says that man will continue in the cycle of birth and death according to his actions. This is the theory of karma or deeds. The tendencies a being acquires in a particular life as a result of his actions will determine his subsequent birth and conduct. Yet no one is eternally condemned. Man still has the use of his free will. The cycle of births and death can be broken by putting faith in the Guru and following his instruction. There is always time for man to save himself.

Although the body is subject to destruction, it is not to be disregarded. It is the shrine of the indwelling spirit. Guru Nanak said, "The body is the palace, the temple, the house of God. Into it He hath put His light eternal." The body is to be used as an instrument of spiritual gain and service to mankind. Human life gives an individual the opportunity to do good to others. A religious man should not withdraw himself from the world. "He should," says Guru Nanak, "battle in the open field. His mind should be perfectly in control and his heart filled with love."

The man of Guru Nanak is the creation of God and he partakes of His Own Light. Since man is of Divine lineage, he essentially is good, not evil. Evil, according to Sikhism, is not something inbuilt in the human situation. It arises out of man's ignorance of his Divine origin, out of his **haumai**. In this world which in Sikhism is posited as a reality being "the True One's Own mansion," man launches upon the rediscovery of his true self. This invests his sojourn in the world with authenticity and reality. That is why Sikh faith admits man's material happiness to be as important as his spiritual liberation. Man's

secular and mundane concerns are not rejected, but are sought to be related to a higher spiritual and moral goal. The persistent opposition in Guru Nanak's thought to oppressive state structures and to empty ritualism is derived directly from the recognition of their anti-human character.

Guru Nanak attaches the greatest importance to moral conduct. His **Japuji** is full of ethical teachings. Devout Sikhs recall these teachings daily as they recite their morning prayer. Perseverance, chastity, wisdom, self-control, patience and obedience to the Will of God are virtues prized most. Practical virtue was thus made an essential ingredient of piety. Orthodoxy (right-doing) was considered as important as Orthodoxy (right-thinking). Guru Nanak says, "Truth is higher than everything else, but higher by far is the living of truth."

Guru Nanak laid special emphasis on seva, or self-abnegating deeds of service. By humble and devoted service one purified one's body and mind. This was the way of a truly religious man.

He must live in the world and be an active agent in promoting the welfare of the community. He should have goodwill towards all and he should be ready to render service to others. **Kirat karni** wand chhakna te **nam japna** is the duty of every true disciple. He must earn his living by his own labour, share with others the fruit of his exertion and practice the discipline of **nam** (absorption in God's remembrance). This is the essence of Guru Nanak's teaching.

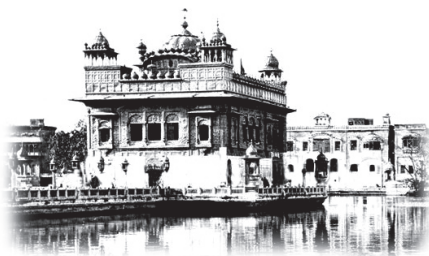
Guru Nanak was a teacher not of his own wisdom. He preached what, he said, had been taught by the Lord Himself. In his **bani** or inspired word, he spoke as a witness to revelation. He had seen or heard something of God to which he called the attention of men. In one of his verses, he said, "As the Lord sends the word so do I deliver it." Again, "I speak only what Thou made me to speak." Thus Guru Nanak found himself to be performing a duty divinely laid upon him.

Prof. Harbans Singh

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ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ



We wish Sikh Courier International all the best in spreading Gurbani and teachings of Guru Granth Sahib worldwide

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THE FIRST GURDWARA, A PLACE OF SIKH WORSHIP, IN NORTH AMERICA

Dr. Harbans Lal

A new Gurdwara is always a milestone of a Sikh community anywhere. It signifies the presence of the Sikh community in that area. Over a century ago, the pioneering Sikhs built their first Gurdwara in North America in the city of Golden.

Golden is a town in southeastern British Columbia, Canada, located 262 kilometers west of Calgary, Alberta, and 713 kilometers east of Vancouver.

As the birth of Sikhism lies thousands of miles away from North America, the year 1890 acquired a special significance in the annals of Sikh history in North America. This year a gurdwara was established first time in North America.

In 1991, my wife Amrita and I availed the opportunity to celebrate the 101st Anniversary of the first Sikh Gurdwara in the American continent.

According to the book, *Kinbasket Country: The Story of Golden and the Columbia Valley*, Published by The Golden & District Historical Society, Golden, BC, Canada (1972), a Sikh Temple was built in Golden, in 1890. The Golden Society extracted evidence for this



Gurdwara from the annals of Golden's history available with the city municipality and other depositories.

In a more recent book, **Golden Memories**, published in 1982, there are several references to the ancient Sikh population of Golden city, including the 1890 Gurdwara. Because of this discovery, the Heritage Conservation Branch of British Columbia, Ministry of Culture, considered installing a historical plaque in the City of Golden to commemorate the first Gurdwara founded in North America.

Golden has been chosen as one of 15 locations in the province to receive a special recognition status of historical importance to the South Asian Canadian community.

There is no other mention of any Gurdwara building in North America before 1890. The famous Ross Road Gurdwara of Vancouver that has been the seat of major Sikh activities for a century is believed to have been built eighteen years later, in 1908.

My wife Amrita and I visited the city of Golden with a population of around 3600 at the time of our visit. This was the year of the 101st celebration of the Golden Gurdwara.

Golden has been chosen as one of 15 locations in the province to receive a special recognition status of historical importance to the South Asian Canadian community.

The city of Golden is located on the Trans-Canada Highway at the Columbia and Kicking



Horse rivers' confluence. Coming from the west, it is a gateway to Glacier National Park that leads to Yoho, Banff, and Jasper National Parks of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. It serves as a great base for exploring hiking trails, world-class skiing, waterfalls, lakes, and various heritage sites. These were the most heavenly places that we ever visited.

Driving around a few miles from Golden, we instantaneously remembered the *Hem Kund valley* described in *Bachiter Natak's* story of Guru Gobind Singh's time. *Hem Kund Sahib*, formally known as Gurudwara Sri Hemkund Sahib Ji, is a Sikh place of worship and pilgrimage site in Himalaya's Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India. This is because, around Golden, there are two lakes of clear blue water surrounded by seven peaks of many glaciers that inhabit this area. Because of these peaks, it is not unusual for a devout Sikh visitor to have a vision of *hem kund* right there. The site is so beautiful that a picture of one of these lakes was chosen as an emblem printed on a \$20 note of Canadian currency.

We found references to Sikhs and the first Gurdwara in many records of Golden City. Besides, the coming of Sikhs to this town and they're establishing the Gurdwara there

generated many stories vividly remembered by many old-timers living in that city.

The last resident who personally knew the first contingent of Sikhs coming to Golden had deceased only a few years earlier. Before her death, she had related many stories of the pioneer Sikhs of that city to many Sikh friends and visitors and the media reporters.

There are records of Sikh patients in the local hospital. There were records of Sikh dealings with local businesses. Sikh skills in the lumber industry are well known to every citizen of Golden.

Sikhs, around 45 in number, are said to have come to this lumber mill town in 1880. Some travelled via mountainous roads that were laden with snow in winter and were hazardous to travel. Others reached this city by boats rowing through the Columbia River.

Hari Singh, who fought in the First World War as a soldier in Royal Canadian Army in Europe, moved to this town in 1902. He was wounded in the war and received treatment in a Golden City hospital.

The Golden inhabitants remembered Hari Singh for his cheerful personality and also for his silk turban. His turban was often found shortened at the laundry where Hari Singh often visited to get his turban cleaned. The laundry owner apparently could not resist keeping a piece of the precious silk material every time he had an opportunity to do so.

The Golden Star newspaper often recorded stories about Sikh old-timers. According to available records, the local hospital treated the first Sikh patient in 1906.

On July 10, 1991, the Star published an article by Manmohan Singh Minhas in commemoration of the role played by Sikhs in the development

and economy of Golden City. Sardar Minhas, a mechanical engineer, and a successful entrepreneur wrote a book on the history of the Sikh Canadians of the Golden city.

During our visit, the city residents told us that the original Gurdwara was built on land allotted by The Columbia River Lumber Co. It was built among bunkhouses that Sikhs used for their living quarters. A wooden building housed the Gurdwara that displayed the Sikh emblem, and *Nishan Sahib*, both installed on the gurdwara exterior. The inside of the gurdwara building was known to be lavishly decorated with plush carpets and rugs where the congregation sat and where Sri *Guru Granth Sahib* installed.

In the beginning, the congregation or *Sangat* was all-male as the first Sikh woman entered Golden City only in 1923. Piara Singh, son of Herdit Singh, was the first Sikh Canadian born in the Golden Hospital nearly a century ago on August 26, 1924.

In the Golden Gurdwara of 1890, the Sunday service was held regularly and was open to everyone. The city residents often came to the service to join Sikhs Canadians in prayer. The

Canadian neighbors frequently met their Sikh friends for an afternoon *chai* at the community kitchen, *langer*. True to the Sikh traditions, the Gurdwara served as a community center for everyone in need of such a place.

As misfortune was to have it in 1927, a massive fire broke out, and it burned the Columbia River Lumber Co and the original Gurdwara building, both to ashes. A few years earlier, the Sikhs Canadians had built a co-operative sawmill to sustain their employment, but it too had to be closed as it could not survive the competition.

Thus, the Sikhs lost their livelihood and were forced to leave this town searching for employment elsewhere. They took their sacred book, Sri *Guru Granth Sahib*, along with them. The Gurdwara land reverted to the city, and the building without *Guru Granth Sahib* ultimately came down.

The current Sikh era in Golden began in 1962 when Gurdial Singh Dhami moved to town. He still lived in Golden when we visited. Then, there were 67 Sikh families residing in Golden City and another eight Sikh families living in the surrounding areas.



In 1978, Ms. Wixen, an old-timer, coaxed local Sikhs to either restore the historical Gurdwara or build another to replace it. He offered his help.

Within a short time, the community collected nearly \$100,000 in donations; most neighbors, irrespective of their religious affiliation, contributed. The Government of British Columbia granted \$15,000 for the Gurdwara building. The state funds came from the lottery account. The Honorable Lames R. Chabot, Minister of Lands and Parks, helped a lot. Local lumber companies donated the needed lumber. The Sikh employees worked overtime in exchange for the lumber they needed for the Gurdwara building, and labor was donated by local Sikhs and Sikhs from neighboring areas. The non-Sikh Golden residents also were active participants in the construction project.

Thus, the new building to house the Gurdwara was entirely all community effort.

The Anniversary was celebrated in the new Gurdwara building that stood at 13th Street and 6th Avenue and was spotted easily for its tall *Nishan Sahib*. It was a two-story building, the upper level for the service and the lower one to house the *langer* facilities and the residential units.

The new Gurdwara building opened in 1981, and Sardar Shiv Singh Jaswal volunteered to perform duties of a *granthi* at no remuneration. During our visit to the Golden City, Jaswal Singh had us as his guest. He retired from his profession to continue to perform the Gurdwara services until 1984, when the new *granthi*, *Giani* Daljit Singh of New Delhi, was installed. Then the leading service was held every Sunday, but a mini service was held daily. The Golden Sikh Cultural Society was found to manage the Gurdwara. Sardar Balhar Singh of Evan Forest Products was serving as the president in 1991.



The Golden city is now a tourist attraction, and many visitors come to pay homage to the Gurdwara every year. Sikh congregations traveling between Vancouver and Calgary pass through this city. They invariably stop here. On the day of our visit to Golden in 1991, a busload of Sikh children came from Vancouver. They rested there and enjoyed their meals in the langar of the Gurdwara. They were en route to their summer camp in Banf National Park, but their bus broke down near this town.

The Society and the local Sikhs welcome every visitor and provide well-known Sikh hospitality to those dropping in on their way to Calgary or Vancouver or those who visit the Canadian Rockies and the Cascade Mountains for vacation.

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MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCES IN RAGA 4 – ASA

Dr. Jaya Patil

ASA is a very old raga, once popular in the Punjab but seldom heard in concerts today. In the Ragmala this is a ragini of raga Megha. However, today it is assigned to the Bilaval thata. Asa is a devotional raga for the cold season and is performed in the early morning just before sunrise. However, it is also known as a twilight melody with a calm mystical mood. Asa was used by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. In the Gurmat Sangeet style Asa is a very important raag. The melodious notes of raag ASA are heard in every particle of the sacred land of Punjab. The golden rays of every dawn enter with the

melodius tune of this raag and the redness of every dusk when it hides in the lap of nature, the melodious tunes of this raag sing the praises "Balhaaree kudarath vasiaa".

ASA raga literally means the melody of hope. As the Gurus emphasised the singing of God's praises before dawn, this raga is conducive to kirtan before day-break. It is a soothing and pleasing raga, appropriate for the singing of the Asa-di-var, the morning-prayer of the Sikhs. Guru Ramdas's Chhants ser the tone of this blissful composition:

"My eyes are damp with the nectar of the Lord; My soul is filled with His love" (7).

Devtas (gods): Food, water, fire, and salt: Var Asa Mehla 1, Sloak 1 preceding pauri 19, page 473.

ਅੰਨੁ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਬੈਸੰਤੁਰ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਲੂਨੁ ਪੰਜਵਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਘਿਰਤੁ ॥ ਤਾ ਹੋਆ ਪਾਕੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ ॥
ਅੰਨ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਬੈਸੰਤਰ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਲੂਣੁ ਪੰਜਵਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਘਿਰਤੁ ॥ ਤਾ ਹੋਆ ਪਾਕੁ ਪਵਿਤੁ ॥

The food is god, the water is god; the fire and salt are gods as well; when the fifth thing, the ghee, is added, then the food becomes pure and sanctified.

According to Hindu mythology, food, water, fire, and salt are all gods. Fire god has other names as well e.g., Pavak and Tejas.

Devas are Hindu and Buddhist deities who act in angelic ways, such as guarding and praying for people, as traditional angels in some other religions do. In Hinduism and Buddhism, believers say that every living thing – person, animal, or plant – has an angelic being called a deva (male) or devi (female) assigned to guard it and help it grow and prosper. Each deva or devi

acts like divine energy, inspiring and motivating the person or other living thing that it guards to better understand the universe and become one with it.

The name "devas" means "shining ones" because devas are beings who have achieved spiritual enlightenment.

"Devas can be defined as forms, images, or expressions through which the essences and energy forces of the Creator or Great Spirit

can be transmitted, or forms through which a specific form of Earth energy or life force can be transmitted for a specific purpose,"

writes Nathaniel Altman in his book *The Deva Handbook: How to Work with Nature's Subtle Energies*.

Avtar (Asa Mehia 3, Ashtpadi 23, page 423)

ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ
ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ

In each and every age, Waheguru creates the kings, who are sung of as his incarnations.

In Hindu mythology, the word avtar means the descent of a deity. There is a mention of 24 incarnations in the Dasam Granth. The important incarnations of Vishnu are Rama and Krishna.

Thus in Hinduism, an avatar is the **bodily incarnation of a deity on earth**. The god can

become incarnate in one place at a time as a full avatar or in many places simultaneously through partial avatars called amshas, such that the main form of the god can still communicate with the partial materializations.

Beethal (Vithal) (Asa Namdev, shabad 2)

ਈਐਂ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਤੂੰਐਂ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਨਹੀ । ਥਾਨ ਥਨਮ੍ਸ੍ਤਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਣਵੈ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਏ ਤੂੰ ਸਰਬ ਸਹੀ ॥੪॥੨॥
ਈਐਂ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਤੂੰਐਂ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਨਹੀ ॥ ਥਾਨ ਥਨੰਤਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਣਵੈ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਏ ਤੂੰ ਸਰਬ ਸਹੀ ॥੪॥੨॥

God is here, God is there; without God, there is no world at all. Prays Nam Dev, O God, you are totally permeating and pervading all places and interspaces. 11 4 2 11

In Hindu mythology Beethal's original name was Pundalik. He was a Brahmin by caste and had no respect for his parents. Once he visited the house of a fellow Brahmin where he saw river goddesses Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati serving as maids. On enquiry they told Pundalik that they were serving his hosts for he was a pious man and had utmost respect for his parents, whereas they consider him as a Chandal for he has no

respect for his parents. This scenario completely changed Pundalik's life. From that moment he started worshipping Vishnu and became a very obedient and a faithful son. Vishnu was highly pleased with his devotion for both God and parents and gave Pundalik a portion of his own divinity. People then renamed Pundalik as Beethal. Later a magnificent temple was raised in his memory.

Bhista (Raga Asa Kabir, shabad 17, page 480)

ਰੋਜਾ ਧਰੈ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰੈ ਕਲਮਾ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਸਤਰਿ ਕਾਬਾ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੋਈ ॥੨॥
ਰੋਜਾ ਧਰੈ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰੈ ਕਲਮਾ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਸਤਰਿ ਕਾਬਾ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੋਈ ॥੨॥

Observing fasts, reciting prayers, and reading Kalma, the Islamic mangal, shall not take you to paradise. The temple of Mecca is hidden within your mind, if you only knew it. ॥ 2 ॥

Bhhist or Jannat or Jannah, in proper Arabic, is the Islamic conception of paradise or heaven. The Arabic word Jannah is a shortened version meaning simply "Garden". Call it the equivalent of 'Swarg' in Hinduism.

Heaven, or the heavens, is a common religious, cosmological, or transcendent place where beings such as gods, angels, spirits, saints, or venerated ancestors are said to originate, be enthroned, or live. According to the beliefs of some religions, heavenly beings can descend to earth or incarnate, and earthly beings can ascend to heaven in the afterlife, or in exceptional cases enter heaven alive. Heaven is often described as a "higher place", the holiest place, a Paradise, in contrast to hell.

The Hindu religion doesn't have a specific notion of heaven like many western religions. They believe in reincarnation until that being has reached enlightenment.

According to the Upanishads, our actions connect us to this world of appearances, which is in fact illusory. What is real is Brahman, the ultimate reality that transcends our sensory experiences. Unfortunately, we live in ignorance of Brahman and act according to our illusions.

This action (karma) causes us to participate in the cycle of death and rebirth from which it's difficult to escape. Thus, if you can escape your ignorance and realize that ultimately you are not you but Brahman itself, then you can achieve release from the cycle of death and rebirth. This release is called moksha.

There are differing versions of what the Christian heaven is like, but the Biblical version is pretty straightforward.

The Book of Revelations depicts heaven as a city called "New Jerusalem" which has a wall and 12 gates, and on each gate is the name of

one of the tribes of Israel along with an angel. There are also 12 foundations, 1 each for the 12 apostles. In fact, we even know the size of the New Jerusalem: 1,400 miles square with a 200-foot wall.

The structure itself is made of all kinds of precious stones, some of which have not yet been identified on this earth. There is a river of "the water of life," which flows from God's throne, and trees of life line the banks of the river and produce fruit every month. Believers will have God's name written on their foreheads, and all pain, tears, and death will disappear forever.

Paradise is what Islamic followers call their heaven. You can gain access by having your actions of good outweigh your bad actions, as laid out by the Quran.

Paradise is a garden where the faithful lie upon couches in a climate-controlled environment surrounded by "bashful, dark-eyed virgins, chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches." They will drink from crystal goblets and silver vessels as "immortal youths" hover about them looking like "scattered pearls."

The believers will be clothed in green silk and brocade and will wear silver bracelets, and they will "drink a pure draught" drawn from Allah's own source as a reward for their striving and patience.

Muslims believe in 7 heavens and 7 hells.

According to Sikhism, there are numerous heaven and hells. Guru Nanak says in Japji:

पाताला पाताल लख आगासा आगास ॥

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

There are nether worlds beneath nether worlds, and hundreds of thousands of heavenly worlds above.

ਏੜਕ ਏੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥
ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੈਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

The Vedas say that you can search and search for them all, until you grow weary.

Parjat, Gopi/s, Bindrabana (Asa di var Mehla 1, skulk 2, precedind pauril3, page 470)

ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਚਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲਿ ਕਾਨ੍ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਜਾਦਸੁ ਮਝਿਆ ॥
ਪਾਰਜਾਤੁ ਗਾਪੀ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਬਿੰਦ੍ਰਾਬਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਕੀਆ ॥
ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਠੁ ਹੂਆ ਨਾਤੁ ਖੁਦਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਮਝਿਆ ॥
ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਚਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲਿ ਕਾਨ੍ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਜਾਦਸੁ ਮਝਿਆ ॥
ਪਾਰਜਾਤੁ ਗੋਪੀ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਬਿੰਦ੍ਰਾਬਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਕੀਆ ॥
ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਠੁ ਹੂਆ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਮਝਿਆ ॥

In the time period of Yajur Veda, Kahn Krishna of the Yadva tribe seduced Chandraavali by force. He brought the Elysian tree for his milk-maid, and revelled in Brindaaban. In the dark age of Kali yuga, the Atharva Veda became prominent.

Yajur Veda (Jujar)

The oldest Hindu scriptures are: Rig Veda, Sam Ved, Yajur Ved and Athar Ved. These were written by Rishis. They were passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth, that is why they are know as Shrutis'. Some people believe that they are written by God himself and their study brings liberation for the readers.

Structure of the Vedas

Each Veda consists of four parts—the Samhitas (hymns), the Brahmanas (rituals), the Aranyakas (theologies) and the Upanishads (philosophies). The collection of mantras or hymns is called the Samhita.

The Brahmanas are ritualistic texts that include precepts and religious duties. Each Veda has several Brahmanas attached to it.

The Aranyakas (forest texts) intend to serve as objects of meditation for ascetics who live in forests and deal with mysticism and symbolism.

The Upanishads form the concluding portions of the Veda and is therefore called the "Vedanta"

or the end of the Veda. The Upanishads contain the essence of Vedic teachings.

Para at

According to Hindu mythology god Indra has a divine tree in his Nandan garden called Parj at or Kalpatar, which he acquired when the great ocean was churned. It is believed that whosoever makes any wish sitting under this tree, that wish is always fulfilled.

According to Muslim belief there is also such a tree on the seventh sky in the garden of Allah.

Gopis were the young maids of Gokal, where Krishna spent his childhood and adolescent age. Amongst them Radha, Chandrawal and Satyabhama were very close to Krishna and it was Satyabhama who had insisted that Krishna brought Parjat tree from the Nanadan garden.

Bindraban

Bindraban is a forest in the district of Mathura near Gokal where Krishna played with Gopis.

Kalia/Kali (Rag Asa Mehla L shabad 7, page 350)

ਜੀਅ ਚੁਪਾਇ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਥਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਕਾਲੀ ਨਥਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਖੜਿਆ ॥

ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਇ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਹਥਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਕਾਲੀ ਨਥਿ ਕਿਆ ਵਡਾ ਭਇਆ ॥

You created all beings, and you hold the world in your hands; what greatness is it to put a ring in the nose of the black cobra, as Krishna did?

Kali or Kalia was a serpent king He had five heads and lived in a rivulent of river Yamuna.

Yugas (Raga Asa Var Mehla 1, cloak 1, page 470)

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਸ: ੧ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਰਥੁ ਇਕੁ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਫੇਰਿ ਵਟਾਈਅਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬੁਝਾਹਿ ਤਾਹਿ ॥
ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਰਥੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਕਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਫੇਰੈ ਰਥੁ ਜਤੈ ਕਾ ਜੋਰੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਦੁਆਪੁਰਿ ਰਥੁ ਤਪੈ ਕਾ ਸਤੁ
ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਕਲਜੁਗਿ ਰਥੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਕਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰੁ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਰਥੁ ਇਕੁ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਜੁਗ ਫੇਰ ਵਟਾਇਅਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਤਾਹਿ ॥
ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਰਥ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਕਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਤ੍ਰੈਤੈ ਰਥੁ ਜਤੈ ਕਾ ਜੋਰੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਦੁਆਪੁਰਿ ਰਥੁ ਤਪੈ ਕਾ ਸਤੁ ਅਗੈ
ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥ ਕਲਜੁਗਿ ਰਥੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਕਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਥਵਾਹੁ ॥

SLOAK MEHLA 1: The soul of the body has one chariot and one charioteer. In age after age they change; the spiritually wise understand this. In the golden age of Sat yuga, contentment was the chariot and righteousness the charioteer. In the silver age of Traytaa yuga, celibacy was the chariot and power the charioteer. In the brass age of Dwaapar yuga, penance was the chariot and truth the charioteer. In the iron age of Kali yuga, fire is the chariot and falsehood the charioteer. ||1||

The Hindu mythology divides the time era into four yugas. The time span of the yugas is counted in both divine years and human years. There count is as follows:

<i>Yugas</i>	<i>Divine years (DV)</i>	<i>Human year= DY x 360</i>
Satyug	4800	1,728,800
Treta	3600	1,296,000
Dwapar	2400	864,000
Kalyug	1200	432,000

The period which precedes a yuga is called Sandhya and the period that follows a yuga is called Sandharasana and each of these periods is equal to 10% of the divine years.

The way of mukti in the four yugas is as follows

<i>Fugas</i>	<i>Way of mukti</i>
Satyug	Truth
Treta	Sacrifices
Dwapar	Rituals
Kalyug	Kirtan

Satyug

In Satyug there was complete truth. The four-fold virtues of truthfulness, devotion, kindness and charity were practised. According to Mahabhartar, in this era, the fruit of the earth was obtained by mere wishes. There was no disease, no malice, no hatred, no cruelty, no fear, no jealousy, no division of gods and demons. There was happiness all over. Everyone was devoted to Waheguru. In this era the Dharm-bull stood on four legs.

In Satyug the chariot is of contentment and the charioteer of Dharma (piety)

Treta

In Treta yuga, the Dharma bull stood only on three legs i.e., one fourth of his merit was lost. The malice grew up in the minds of the people. They became shrewd and began to act with motives. Still they were devoted to their duties and performed the rites and ceremonies punctually.

In this yuga, the chariot is celibacy and force is the charioteer.

Dwapar

In Dwapar yuga the Dharma-bull had only two feet, only the enlightened person could realise the truth. People performed religious acts with motives and acts of charity were performed with hope of reward; no ritual could bring mukti with the meditation of Waheguru.

In this yuga, the chariot is of austerity and charity is the charioteer.

Kalyug

In the Kalyug the Dharma-bull has only one foot, and the attachment of maya has increased and this attachment has brought darkness and dust all over. The vices have increased. The corruption and violence reign supreme. According to the Bhagvat Purans most of the people of this era are wicked, vicious and unkind.

In this yuga, the chariot is of fire and the falsehood is the charioteer.

Lanka (Raga Asa Kabir, shabad 21, page 481)

लम्का सा कोटु समुंद सी खाई ॥

लंका सा कोटु समुंद सी खाई ॥

ASA: A fortress like that of Lanka, with the ocean as a moat around it — there is no news about that house of Ravan. ||1||

According to the story of Ramayan the island of Lanka was very vast. It had seven wide moats and seven walls of stone and metal. It was made of Gold by the divine architect Vishkarma.

Narad (Raga Asa Mehla 1, shabad 4 page 349)

नारदु नाचै कलि का भाउ ॥

ਨਾਰਦੁ ਨਾਚੈ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਭਾਉ ॥

Narad dances to the tune of the dark Age of Kalyug

Narad is the official hymn-singer of Vishnu. He was born out of the forehead of Brahma and is a favourite son of Sarasvati. He knows everything that is happening in the three world - Sky, earth and netherland (*patal*). He is popular for creating discord among gods by his diplomatic expression of speech.

Narak (Raga Asa Mehla 5, shabad 24, page 389)

ਕਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਸਹਿ ਕਰੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਅਚੁਤਾਰਾ ॥੩॥

ਕ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਮਹਿ ਵਰਤੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਅਚੁਤਾਰਾ ॥੩॥

The world is under the influence of the three qualities*. The mortal is reincarnated, again and again, into heaven and hell. ||3||

*Sato gun – peace, Rajo gun – ego and Tamo gun – knowledge.

In Hindu literature there are twenty-eight different divisions of hell, though Manu has described twenty-one hells. Most of them are situated below patalas and are regions of darkness, fear, punishment and terror. These are described, with the reference of particular crime punishment. In Islam there are seven divisions of hell called dozak, they are classified as:

1. Johunnam – temporary place of punishment; place where souls are punished before their admittance to heaven.
2. Laza – hell of blazing fire.
3. Al-Hutamah – hell of intense fire.
4. Saeer – hell of flaming fire.
5. Saqar – a scorching fire.
6. Al-jahim – a huge hot fire.
7. Hawiyah – a bottomless pit.

Swarg

The exact equivalent of swarg is heaven. According to the Hindu and the Muslim beliefs It is a place where flows the rivers of

somras (alcohol), milk and honey; it is a place where lives the most beautiful apsaras and it is place where a soul finds all the comforts and luxuries it had ever dreamt of on earth. God and prophets do have office/holiday chambers in there.

Muslim believe that there are seven Bashits with varying degree of amenities, whereas according to Hindu scripture they range from 2-7 in number. The Sikhs, however, count them to be numerous.

According to yet another Hindu belief the raja of one swarg is god Indra and the lord of another swarg is Vishnu. Vishnu's swarg is called Baikunth. In Mahabharat it is stated that the Baikunth is made of gold. It has a radius of forty thousand miles. All the buildings are made of jewels. Vishnu is seated on lotuses and Lakshmi sits on his right hand. The fragrance from her body spreads to eight hundred miles. There is beauty all around here.

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