ROLE OF SCIENTIFIC SEARCH AND INTERPRETATION IN GURBANI

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ABSTRACT
To comprehend the Truth in Gurbani written and promulgated by Guru Nanak, one has to compare the results of preconceived opinions of the ‘Unknown’ by historical interpreters based on Theology against the scientific approach appreciated and adapted by Guru Nanak himself and the succeeding Guru Sahiban. They applied all evidence including religious literatures and praxis in search of the truth and realized that ultimate explanation of reality lies in accepting the freedom of natural phenomena and living by abiding it. This article is an attempt to comprehend role of scientific search and interpretation in the Gurbani.

INTRODUCTION
Guru Nanak, founder of Sikh(sm) (1469-1539 CE), was divinely inspired, well educated, extensively travelled person that had realized ‘TRUTH’ in the Creator and the natural phenomena at very young age. From his writings (incorporated in Aad Guru Granth Sahib-AGGS[1] the Holy Scripture, it becomes obvious that through discourses, discussions and observation of praxis in various religions, he discovered religious mentors deluged with EGO (haumai/uni0A39/uni0A09/uni0A2E/uni0A48Y), promulgating nothing more than chaos by indulging in self serving gains. He critically reviewed the available literature and religious praxis of Indic origin, as well as Islam injected into India and established by Islamic invaders from the Middle East; and, found that there was lack of Truth in understanding ultimate Reality.

THE GOD
The humanity in India searching the truth was kept in the dark by misguided religious mentors having their belief in miraculous stories about the human forms of the God known as ‘doer all, judgmental, punisher, vengeful, and benevolent to favorite devotees, mostly belonging to the preaching class’. Knowing that the humanity, in general has the capacity to be deceived or deceives itself by believing in anything but the truth; most religious authorities with their clever, but often abstruse meanings have been shielding ancient interpretations of the Reality from the humanity. They have been promulgating presence of fearful and judgmental God in the very midst of human ignorance, doubts, fears, and sinfulness; in other words, many of the superfluous and superstitious beliefs that Guru Nanak and the succeeding Sikh Gurus did not approve. That is why Gurbani recommends application of scientific critical analysis (Bibek Budhi) in evaluating “historical theology” and false promulgation of religious ethos. The Gurbani written by Guru Nanak promulgates the GOD-ONE IN ALL; truthful, loving and caring that is beyond time and space, fearless, inimical, unborn, and never anthropomorphic.

The human realities of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) are surely essential for our ability to identify with and own, the faith that it embodies. As promoted by the Gurus, the Gurbani has essential clues for us to learn how we might discover God’s presence in the midst of our own fears and foolishness. Guru Nanak wrote:
First of ALL, The One Universal Creator is unique, Immortal, unborn, beyond social class or involvement; He is inaccessible and unfathomable, with no form or involvement; Searching critically, I have realized the God in each and every aspect of creation. I am a sacrifice to one who realizes and inspires others to do the same. By Guru's Grace, I have obtained the supreme bliss. AGGS, M 1, p 838.

From the foregoing quotation, Guru Nanak is clearly promulgating pervasiveness of the God in all aspects of the nature and natural phenomena and that includes humanity as well. The spiritual influence and teaching of AGGS is of crucial importance with respect to its role it plays in our learning of the discoveries of science and how it relates to the challenges of truthful living.

Guru Nanak, comprehending vagaries prevailing among the religious praxis of his time, and felt need for logical and scientific analytical methods and searchers for realization of the Ultimate Reality, he wrote:

\[
\text{Themselves, living in deception, they deceive their adherents as well.}
\]

AGGS, M 1, p 139-140

It can be clearly understood that in the Gurbani narrated and written, there are very sound statements relating to the TRUTH about the God and ITS creation. The Ultimate Reality, according to Guru Nanak, is to be understood without any mythological miraculous stories created by humans.

**PREVAILING BRAHMANISM INDIA (15TH-16TH CENTURY)**

To maintain authoritative supremacy over the lower castes, the upper class Brahmins were actively engaged in controlling their powers in learning, knowledge, purity, forbearance, status, and piety; they applied severe social controls in ethical traits to isolate themselves from the lower castes [2]. According to Sloka 30/1 \[16\] [2], “As at the change of the seasons each season of its own accord assumes its distinctive marks, even so corporeal beings (resume in new births) their (appointed) course of
action. 31. But for the sake of prosperity of the worlds
He caused the Brahmans, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and
the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arms, his thighs
and from his feet. 32. Dividing his own body, the Lord
became half male and half female; with that female he
produced Virag. Calling upon the supernatural
phenomena, the Brahmans took advantage of developing
all kinds of Vedic and Vedantic philosophical laws to
impress upon gullible people of India that their births in
low castes are pre-ordained. 98. The very birth of a
Brahman is an eternal incarnation of the sacred law; for
he is born to (fulfill) the sacred law and becomes one
with Brahman. 99. A Brahman coming into existence, is
born as the highest on earth, the Lord of all creat
ed
things, precisely as a 
Brahmin; on account of the excellence of his origin The
Whatever exists in the world is, the property of the
Brahman. 101. The Brahman eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel.
Brahman is, indeed entitled to all. 101. The Brahman
born as the highest on earth, the Lord of all created
beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. 100.

Challenging Brahmanic Practices
The Slokas of Manu Simiritis (30-32, 98-101) mentioned
in the earlier description prompted Bhagat Kabir to express logical and scientific reasoning in challenging the
superstition promulgated by the Vedantic philosophy of
high caste Brahmans, when he wrote:

Brahmanic practices
...
The one without\textsuperscript{17} the Guru, has no\textsuperscript{19} redeeming virtues\textsuperscript{18} at all\textsuperscript{20}.

Impurity\textsuperscript{25} comes from turning\textsuperscript{22} one’s face\textsuperscript{21} away from God. ||||

AGGS, M 1, p 1240.

**GOD AND GOD’S WORD**

It all depends upon the concept and interpretation of the God and the nature/creation that the “WORDS” are conceived and applied by humans to designate God with their desired attributes. None other than the human claims the ‘word’ originated from/with the God; thus the ‘word’ is God, a popular belief being promulgated by almost every religious and non-religious mentor. **It does not matter how high or how deep religious authorities wish to heap admiration upon the God for “The Word and divinity”; when critically analyzed, it all comes to originate from human mind.** Guru Nanak, in the following Sabd explicates the concept of God when he wrote:

\textquotation

\textbf{O Supreme\textsuperscript{1} Akal Purakh\textsuperscript{2}, being Transcendent, You do not take birth\textsuperscript{4}}

By the Hukam\textsuperscript{8} (universal laws), the Universe/ Earths\textsuperscript{7} are formed\textsuperscript{5}; by forming these, You merge\textsuperscript{9} into them. Your\textsuperscript{10} Form\textsuperscript{11} cannot be known\textsuperscript{12}; how can one contemplate\textsuperscript{13} on you? You\textsuperscript{16} are pervading\textsuperscript{14} and permeating\textsuperscript{15} all nature\textsuperscript{17}; You Yourself reveal\textsuperscript{18} Your creative potency\textsuperscript{19} through the nature.

Your\textsuperscript{19} treasures\textsuperscript{22} of devotional\textsuperscript{20} worship are overflowing\textsuperscript{21}; they never decrease\textsuperscript{23}. These gems\textsuperscript{24}, jewels\textsuperscript{25} and diamonds\textsuperscript{26} - their value\textsuperscript{27} cannot be estimated\textsuperscript{28}. The blessed\textsuperscript{29} one with your\textsuperscript{30} mercy\textsuperscript{31} is linked\textsuperscript{34} to the service\textsuperscript{15} of the True Guru\textsuperscript{12}.

One who sings\textsuperscript{37} the Glorious Praises of the Akal Purakh, one\textsuperscript{38} never\textsuperscript{35} suffers any deficiency\textsuperscript{36}. ||3||

AGGS, M 5, p 1095.

\textit{It becomes clear from the forgoing Sabd that concept of the God according to Gurbani is not the same as the traditional religions promote. Since, the God is an unknown, indescribable, unfathomable Entity that is permeated throughout the nature; IT can only be realized through the natural phenomena. Even though the Earth is a miniscule blue dot in the Milky Way Galaxy and humanity is known to exist here; it has abundance of everything for human sustenance, so long as Hukam (the universal laws ministering natural phenomena) is accepted and obeyed. The sad reality in religious history is that humans employ their own ideologies, desires, needs, and fears in evolving the concept of a God that is an angry, vengeful, judgmental, discriminative, self serving, seeking self admiration and praise for everything created in the natural phenomena; and, want to use God as an ALL-DOER.}

**WAS GURU NANAK, A SCIENTIST?**

In the literal human understanding, the answer to this question is NO; Guru Nanak was not a scientist. He was well educated, experienced, effective creative thinker, a natural philosopher that had divine inspiration to promulgate the Truth of the Creator, Nature and natural phenomena. Contrary to popular belief, miraculous stories linked to his biography are neither true nor he believed in any such happenings. From his narratives, it becomes obvious that he analyzed human mind, soul and nature with scientific principles, not only with objective point of view but subjective aspect as well, to understand true nature of the ultimate reality. The logical and critical analysis will reveal that every religion, scientific explorations, and metaphysical systems have originated from human mind.

Guru Nanak’s teaching reflects not only the knowledge of earthly existence of humanity but also the nature of Cosmos and the Universe. Guru Nanak wrote:

\textquotation

\textbf{I Know\textsuperscript{4} the One\textsuperscript{1} who pervades all the realms\textsuperscript{3} of the Universe\textsuperscript{2}.}

As Gurmukh\textsuperscript{5}, understand\textsuperscript{6} and realize\textsuperscript{8} the Sabd\textsuperscript{7}. The Enjoyer\textsuperscript{11} enjoys\textsuperscript{10} each and every aspect\textsuperscript{9}, and yet He remains detached\textsuperscript{12} from all\textsuperscript{17}. ||14||

AGGS, M 1, p 1041.

According to Guru Nanak and the succeeding Sikh Guru Sahiban, human is provided the opportunity to explore, understand, introspect-internalize, and realize the knowledge about itself and its relation with the Nature. In 1962, Pearl S. Buck of Pennsylvania, a noble laureate
in literature was presented with an English translation of Aad Guru Granth Sahib done by Dr Gopal Singh [4]. She studied 4 volumes of the Holy Scripture like a gemologist, and in her communiqué with Dr Gopal Singh, she wrote:

“They (the Holy Scripture AGGS-translated volumes) speak for the human heart and searching mind. One wonders what might have been produced if the ten founders of the Sikh religion had been acquainted with the findings of modern science. Where would their quest for knowledge have led them had science been their means instead of religion?”

CONCLUSION

To comprehend the true nature of gems, a gemologist not only performs analysis of cut gemstones rather scientifically understands the atomic structure and identifies its origin as it is a major factor in valuing natural and cut stones[3]. The Gurbani written by Guru Nanak and others incorporated in AGGS demands an urgent need for logical and scientific search for interpretation, to help educated masses comprehend the real Truth. Most of Guru Nanak’s Bani, deals with an inquiry into prevalent concepts of the God, nature, and the natural phenomena; provides logical and scientific explanation, and resolve to the Ultimate Reality. Such rational and honest inquiry makes his Bani, a philosophic examination of basic concepts of Truth and existence within phenomenal nature.

REFERENCES:

1. AGGS (अग्निवाद) - Aad Guru Granth Sahib 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak, M is replaced with the name of Bhagat/ Bhatt for their Bani, p = Page of the AGGS).


4. Singh, Gopal; Sri Guru Granth Sahib, (English Version); Mrs. Pearl S. Buck, Nobel Laureate. Publisher,