

EXEGESIS AND MISEXPOSITION OF THE GURBANI

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ABSTRACT

The word 'exegesis' means to interpret, explain and lead out. Its purpose is to determine what the writer (Guru, Sant, Bhagat, Prophet etc.) intended to express, and the reader's reception – how would the intended reader understand what was written. This is crucial in scriptural studies (the Bible, Quran, Vedas and Aad Guru Granth Sahib, etc.) due to the worldly, material and cultural gap between old or medieval text and the modern reader. We have pre-determined ideas about the meaning of words or texts and these beliefs or imports can prejudice our reading and exposition. Presently, we are confronting various challenges from mispronunciation to mythologised, fantasized(fictional) , illogical and trumped - up expositions (which are actually unhistorical and anti Gurbani). Though we cannot entirely avoid our individual, cultural and historic inclination/predilection, we can strive to be conscious of the impact these have on our understanding. The technique of exegesis assists us to read and analyze scriptural text by supplying tools for going through the text and by enhancing consciousness and understanding of the prejudices and partisanship that influence the way we read and analyze .Exegesis is a methodical and systematized procedure by which a person can achieve a sensible, well grounded and well reasoned awareness and understanding of the import, interpretation and essence of the text of Aad Guru Granth Sahib.

Scriptural reasoning today is dependent upon cultivating the truth by weeding out errors of interpretation and unacceptable distortions. The intellectual process creates a less troublesome and better suited vocabulary that enhances rational assessment of the explicit sense of scriptural language used. The tradition of scriptural interpretation acknowledges the evolving and developing intellectual process which permits the analyst to search for the true intention and contextual importance (and exposition) of the re-contextualized exegesises of past commentators and *teeka-kars*. This allows analyst, *teeka-kar* and interpreter to engage in his own hermeneutics whilst ensuring exposition which are meticulously examined for their historical value in as much as they disclose the true meaning of the text.

Sikh Scripture speaks of metaphysical, spiritual and worldly affairs in poetical verses in a language of the day. However *Bani-kars* utilized mythical names and historical events to convey their own teachings. They also made use of metaphorical, allegorical, figurative and simile terms but many interpreters and preachers added their own Puranic mythical and imaginary stories. Many of these "expositionists" have no clue of actual historical background/events and facts, sociological concepts and inter-connections [logical and scientific facts and processes] behind Gurbani's Sabds. Allusions to contemporary events can be helpful in exposition, so long as they are not distorted and misinterpreted. Aad Guru Granth Sahib is the primary and final authority and source of theology but it is being "domesticated" and misinterpreted through the hermeneutical glasses of Vedic Gurmat, concocted stories and misuse of Sikh literature - which are not entirely authentic and seem to have drawn on conjecture themselves. The aim of exegesis is to take us closer to the true spirit of text as best as we can today.

(**Editorial Note:** Complete paper was not submitted.)