

A UNIQUE CONCEPT OF GOD IN NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of God has been changing from the time immemorial to present day. Its concept differs from religion to religion and also from individual to individual. During the Science Age some people have become Atheists, while the others consider themselves as Agnostics and still some think that they are Positivists. Contrary to this there are still many who would deify anything to realize certain demands or spirituality. In this article concept of God in some major religions has been discussed briefly, however, the concept of God in Nanakian Philosophy has been dealt in depth, which may satisfy the quest of many to understand God.

INTRODUCTION

Primitive peoples paid religious devotion either to nature as a deified collective entity or to all things in nature, including the elements (air, water, fire, and earth formerly believed to compose a physical universe), celestial bodies, plants, animals, and humanity. The worship of fire, found among many primitive peoples, reached its highest development in the ancient *Parsis* sect of Persia. Celestial bodies have been deified in the religious systems of primitive and highly civilized peoples alike. The Hindus, the Babylonians, ancient Persia and ancient Egyptians worshiped the sun. Plants and trees have been worshiped as totems or because of their usefulness, beauty, or fear-inspiring aspect. Both the soma plant of India and the coca shrub of Peru have been worshiped for the intoxicating properties of products derived from them. Field crops, regarded as harboring spirits of fertility, have been worshiped both by primitive tribes and by the peasants of Europe, among whom traces of the cult may still be found [7].

As the civilization progressed, many religious leaders started to think that there may be a being that is so different from finite beings - a mystery beyond the powers of human conception. In this connection Bloss [3], a theologian, pointed out that the belief in Monotheism developed with the development of ability of reasoning in man. He puts it as follows:

"In this stage man more reasonably and systematically posits deities who control a number of phenomena. This

polytheism then gives way to a more rational monotheism in the final civilized stage of evolution. Monotheism arises as philosophers see that there must exist only one great mover who has created universal laws of nature. This is, of course, the God of the Enlightenment which reflects Taylor's fundamental belief in reason and optimism created by the scientific method."

DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF GOD

The Infopedia [7] has given a very brief but critical analysis about the concepts of God in different religions of the world. The concepts of selected religions are given as follow:

The Jewish Idea of God

The idea of transcendence is introduced in the opening verses of the Hebrew Scriptures, in which God is presented as creator. This explains the Jewish antipathy to idolatry-no creature can represent the Creator, so it is forbidden to make any material image of him. Nonetheless, it is also part of the creation teaching that the human being is made in the image of God. Thus, the Hebrew understanding of God was frankly anthropomorphic. He promised and threatened, he could be angry and even jealous; but his primary attributes were righteousness, justice, mercy, truth, and faithfulness. He is represented as king, judge, and shepherd.

Christian Conceptions

Christianity began as a Jewish sect and thus took over the Hebrew God, the Jewish Scriptures eventually

becoming, for Christians, the Old Testament. During his ministry, Jesus was probably understood as a holy man of God, but by the end of the 1st century Christians had exalted him into the divine sphere, and this created tension with the monotheistic tradition of Judaism. The solution of the problem was the development of the doctrine of the triune God, or Trinity (The unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead), which, although it is suggested in the New Testament, was not fully formulated until the 4th century.

Islam

Islam arose as a powerful reaction against the ancient pagan cults of Arabia, and as a consequence it is the most starkly monotheistic of the three biblically rooted religions. The name 'Allah' means simply "the God." He is personal, transcendent, and unique, and Muslims are forbidden to depict him in any creaturely form. The primary creed is that *"There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the apostle of Allah."* Allah has seven basic attributes: life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, seeing, and speech. The last three are not to be understood in an anthropomorphic sense. His will is absolute, and all that happens depends on it, even to the extent that believers and unbelievers are predestined to faith or unbelief.

Hinduism

In Hinduism (q.v.), Holy Being can be understood in several ways. Philosophically, it is understood as Brahma (q.v.), the one eternal, absolute reality embracing all that is, so that the world of change is but the surface appearance (*maya*/illusion). In popular religion, many gods are recognized, but properly understood, these are manifestations of Brahma. Each god has his or her own function. The three principal gods, charged respectively with creating, preserving, and destroying, are joined as the *Trimurti*, or three powers, reminiscent of the Christian Trinity. Strictly speaking, the creator god does not create in the Judeo-Christian sense, for the world is eternal and he is simply the god who has been from the beginning. In *bhakti* Hinduism, the way of personal devotion, the god *Isvara* is conceived as personal and is not unlike the Judeo-Christian God.

DISBELIEF IN GOD

Arguments against belief in God are as numerous as arguments for it. *Atheists* absolutely deny the existence of God. Some, for instance, believe the material universe constitutes ultimate reality; others argue that the prevalence of suffering and evil (q.v.) in the world precludes the existence of a sacred being. *Agnostics* believe that the evidence for and against the existence of God is inconclusive; they, therefore, suspend

judgment. *Positivists* believe that rational inquiry is restricted to questions of empirical fact, so that it is meaningless either to affirm or deny the existence of God [7].

THE GOD AND THE NATURE

Mentioning of the Nature was conspicuously missing in all the above religious concepts of God. The concept of the Nature may be the most recent development of atheists and scientists to cover the activities of the God.

Dictionaries' Views about the God and Nature

The Dictionary of Science and Technology [11] does not define or explain terms like, the God, and the Nature, except that it describes the nature only of its involvement in the living organisms as follows:

"An abstract entity regarded as regulating or epitomizing the general activities of plants and animals, especially higher animals." This term is restricted to the living organisms, i. e., the nature of plants, or animals [11].

The English Language dictionaries have defined these terms as follows:

The Nature

"A creative and controlling force in the universe." [27].

A more explanatory definition of the Nature is as follows [26]:

"A creative, controlling agent, force, or principle, or set of such forces or principles, operating or operative in a thing and determining wholly or chiefly its constitution, development, well-being, or the like." Specifically:

- (a) *In the universe, such a force or agency, often viewed as a creative guiding intelligence, or such principles regarded as established for the regulation of the universe or observed in its operation - often personified and sometimes equivalent to God, natural laws, universal order, etc.*
- (b) *In an individual, an inner driving or promoting force, as instinct, appetite, desire, or the sum of such."*

(It is almost same definition given in the Dictionary of Science and Technology as above [11].)

The God

"The supreme or ultimate reality." {It is almost the same definition as given above in (a)}

"The being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness whom men worship as creator and ruler of the universe." [27]

(This is almost the same concept of the God as that of the major religions of the world.)

The Almighty

"Having absolute power over all (Almighty God). Relatively unlimited in power." [27]

CONCEPT OF GOD IN NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

1. GOD AND NATURE

Although most theologians use the word, 'God' for 'the creative and controlling power', Guru Nanak has not assigned any specific name to this power. The word 'God' has different meanings for different peoples, e.g., various incarnations of the God into different gods and goddesses. For example, there are 34 Greek gods; 12 principal Roman gods; 31 Egyptian gods; and many gods with their consorts and goddesses in Hinduism [5]. Therefore, for the sake of clarity and uniformity in this study 'the creative and controlling power' has been termed as 'the Almighty' as well as 'the God'. A pronoun, 'It', has been assigned for these terms instead of 'He' or 'She' used by many theologians. The 'It' was considered the most appropriate pronoun because the Abstract/Transcendent Entity is free from gender classification.

According to Guru Nanak the Almighty was created by itself, It created its own characters, then It created the Nature. Finally, the Almighty pervades in the Nature, i. e., in the Laws of Nature {Commonly known as the Laws of Universe, although these laws now have been named after their discoverers or according to the action of the law [11]}. The following verses explain some characteristics of the Almighty, creation of the Nature, the Laws of the Nature, and Its absolute power over all. These verses also indicate that no specific name has been assigned to the Almighty.

ਅਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਅਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ ॥
ਦਾਤਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਤੂੰ ਤੁਸਿ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਸਾਉ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣੋਈ ਸਭਸੈ ਦੇ ਲੈਸਹਿ ਜਿੰਦੁ ਕਵਾਉ ॥
ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ ॥੧॥

AGGS, M 1, P 463.

"It (The Almighty) was created by Itself, and It created Its own characters (Naon); Secondly, After creating the Nature, Pervading (kar aasan)* in the Nature, delights Itself. It (Data) Itself is the Creator, You create (daevae) and then do the expansion (Pasao) (of the universe). You know everything; You give and take the body and life.

Pervading in the Nature, delights Itself."

* *Kar aasan* = Sitting = pervading.

ਜਿਵ ਫੁਰਮਾਏ ਤਿਵ ਤਿਵ ਪਾਹਿ ॥
ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਥਾਉ ॥
ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਹਾ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਵਾਰਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਵਾ ਏਕ ਵਾਰ ॥

AGGS, Jap 19, P 4.

"As is ordered, so is done.

Whatever is created, It is the Almighty Itself (Nao).

There is no place without the Almighty (Navae).

It is beyond my (Nanak) power to comprehend the Nature (kudrat) (created by You).

I (Nanak) cannot sacrifice myself even once upon You (for the creation)."

In 'Asa di Var' Guru Nanak has summed up Its pervasion in the Nature and Its infiniteness as follows:

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਟਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 469.

"Nanak praises Its pervasion in the Nature (kudrat); Its infiniteness cannot be comprehended." 'Pause'

2. EXISTENCE OF GOD

In Nanakian Philosophy God exists. The existence of God has been reported even before the beginning of the time and space. This has been explained in details in the *slok* following the title 'Jap' on the first page and in *Sukhmani* at page 285 of the AGGS with an exception that the spelling of ਭੀ is changed to ਭਿ :

ਆਦਿ ¹ ਸਚੁ ² ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ³ ਸਚੁ॥ ਹੈ ⁴ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ⁵ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

(AGGS, Jap, P 1 & AGGS, M 5, P 285)

Was in existence ² before the beginning of the time and space ¹;

Was in existence in the past ³;

Is in existence in the present ⁴;

Will remain in existence forever ⁵ (in the future)."

Dr Sahib Singh [23] also interpreted 'sach' as 'exists'. Jodh Singh [from Ref # 15] also agrees that the main thing about Him that He has no name that is why we always call Him by the name of **Satt** (Exists for ever). (ਇਹ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਦਾ ਕਦੀ ਨਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਦਾ ਉਹ ਨੂੰ "ਸਤਿ" ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ).

The word 'sach' has been interpreted as 'existence' according to Dr Sahib Singh [23], although it is misleading because anything that exists must be a

being. The other meaning of 'sach' is 'truth'. The truth means reality, and reality is that which exists. Therefore, the word 'exist' has been used as an allegory for the existence of the Abstract / Transcendent reality. Although It is an Abstract/Transcendent Entity, It still exists according to the Nanakian Philosophy.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

i) Some typical characteristics of the Almighty (God):

ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾ ਵਡਾ ਨਾਉ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾ ਸਚ ਨਾਮਾਉ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਥਾਉ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਲਾਉ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਬੂਝੈ ਸਭਿ ਭਾਉ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾ ਪੁਛਿ ਨ ਦਾਤਿ ॥
 ਵਡੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜਾ ਅਪੇ ਆਪਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਰ ਨ ਕਥਨੀ ਜਾਇ ॥
 ਕੀਤਾ ਕਰਣਾ ਸਰਬ ਰਜਾਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 463.

*"It is Its greatest character that It is great being (Nao).
 It is Its greatest character that It (Nao) exists (sach).
 It is Its greatest character that Its place of living is eternal.
 It is Its greatest character that It knows (our) utterance.
 It is Its greatest character that It understands (our) affection for It.
 It is Its greatest character that It does not seek permission of anybody.
 It is Its greatest character that It is by Itself.
 Nanak says: Its creations cannot be described.
 And It exists in all of Its creation."*

ii) The Laws of Nature

It has already been discussed that the Almighty was created by Itself, created the Nature and resides in that Nature. It also created the Laws of Nature (the Laws of Universe). Therefore, every action and reaction in the universe and in every living organism are governed by the Laws of Nature or the Laws of Universe:

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਹਜੇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਉਪਾਈ ॥
 ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥
 ਅਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਆਪੇ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ ਹੇ ॥੧॥

AGGS, M 3, P 1043.

*"It created easily the universe according to Its Order (hukm) (Laws of Nature).
 It creates and then watches Its Own creation (vadiai).
 It works by Itself and makes the others to work (according to the Laws of Nature),
 and It pervades in Its Own Order (hukm) (Laws of Nature)."*

In the above verse Guru Nanak again emphasizes that It (the Almighty) creates according to Its Own Laws (*Hukm*) (Laws of Nature) and It pervades in Its Own Laws.

In every living being there is Nature (*kudrat*) (Laws of Nature) that controls their activities and all other events in and around the living beings as explained by Guru Nanak in the following verse:

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਦਿਸੈ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਭਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਾਤਾਲੀ ਆਕਾਸੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪੈਨੁਣੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਰਬ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਰੰਗੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਜੀਅ ਜਹਾਨੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਨੇਕੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਬਦੀਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥
 ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਖਾਕੁ ॥
 ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਾਦਿਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪਾਕੀ ਨਾਈ ਪਾਕੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਰਤੈ ਤਾਕੇ ਤਾਕੁ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 464.

"Under the Laws of Nature one sees, hears, fears and pleases oneself.

The Laws of Nature are in every creation.

(Here the so-called Patals and Akashes are the metaphors for the creation.)

Veds, Puran, Semitic books discuss (Kudrat) the Laws of Nature.

Eating, drinking, wearing and love are all under the Laws of Nature.

All the species of all kinds (rang) are under the Laws of Nature.

One gets virtues, sins, honor and dishonor under the Laws of Nature

The air, water, fire, earth, and soil are under the laws of Nature.

It is all Your Nature and You are the Creator, and Your Name (naei) is holiest of all.

Nanak sees that every thing prevails under Its Laws of Nature.

Finally, Guru Nanak simplifies the description of the *hukm* (Laws of the Nature) as follows:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੇ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥੨॥

AGGS, Jap 2, P 1.

"Everything is in interiority of the hukm (Laws of Nature),

Nothing is in exteriority of the hukm.

Nanak says if one can realize/comprehend the above fact (Laws of Nature),

One can get rid of egoism."

iii) Inaccessible and Unapproachable Characters of God

In Nanakian Philosophy the God has been described as Inaccessible and Unapproachable Entity as follows:

1. ਬਾਬਾ ਅਲਹੁ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 53.
O Baba! *“The Allah (God) is Inaccessible and Infinite.”*
2. ਅਲਹੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਕਾਦਰੁ ਕਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਕਰੀਮੁ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 64.
“The Allah (God) is Unknowable, Inaccessible, Creator, and Merciful.”
3. ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਿ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਤੀ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 138.
“You, O Creator Lord, are Unfathomable. You Yourself created the Universe.”
4. ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਧਾਨੋ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 437.
“The Supreme God is unfathomable, unapproachable, infinite and incomparable and above all.”
5. ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਗੰਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਨ ਕਰਮਾ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 597.
“It is unknowable, infinite, unapproachable and imperceptible. It is not subject to death or karma.”

iv) How to Reach the Inaccessible?

From the above characteristic of the God, a new question arises, if the God is inaccessible then how to reach It?

Guru Nanak himself has posed this question as follows: ਤਿਤੁ ਅਗਮ ਤਿਤੁ ਅਗੰਮਪੁਰੇ ਕਹੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਰਾਮ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 436.

“Tell me, with which method can I reach That, Who is Inaccessible and lives in Inaccessible City?”

(Note: Ram has been used here in an allegoric expression.)

He (Guru Nanak) answers this question as follows in the same verse:

ਸਚੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਸਾਰਿ ਗੁਣਾ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਰਾਮ ॥

ਸਚੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਿਧਾਨੰ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 436.

“By practicing truth and self-restraint (for bad deeds), and contemplating on the wisdom and teachings of the Guru, one attains the treasures of excellence meaning by this way one reaches the Inaccessible and Its Inaccessible City.”

Guru Nanak has also stressed that other methods like *jap* (repetition of mantra or a verse) *tap* (mortification) are no way to reach the Inaccessible. It has been explained in the

same verse as follows:

“ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਹਠਿ ਨਿਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 436.

“People have grown weary of repetition of mantras, or verses; and practicing mortification and performing persistent rituals, still could not reach the Inaccessible city of the Inaccessible.”

Finally Guru Nanak emphasizes in the same verse that one can only reach the Inaccessible (named as Jagjeevan – Life of the world - here) through attaining tranquillity (*sehj*) as revealed by the Ever-Existing (Satsguru):

“ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਗਜੀਵਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬੁਝ ਬੁਝਾਈਐ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 436.

Nanak says: *“The Ever-Existing, the God, has revealed that one can reach the Inaccessible (Jagjivan - the Life of the world) through the state of tranquillity (attained by the method explained above).”*

v) The Almighty is Inside Every Living Being and Everywhere:

The Almighty is inside every individual according to Guru Nanak:

ਸਾਚਉ ਦੂਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਈ ॥

ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਰਵਿ ਰਹੇ ਕਿਨਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥੩॥

AGGS, M 1, P 421.

“The Ever-existing (sachau) is not far away;

It is inside (of every living being to regulate and epitomize all the activities).

Wherever one sees, It is pervading everywhere; Nobody can evaluate Its reality.”

The same expression of regulating and epitomizing activities of living being revealed by Guru Nanak about 5 centuries ago is being accepted now as discussed previously.

NAMING THE GOD

In some religions God is incarnated in human form with different names at different times and most of the times the incarnated god has a wife or a consort. Guru Nanak rejects the incarnation of the Almighty into human form from time to time as accepted in Hinduism and some other religions. A number of names have been assigned to God by other religions, e. g., Ram, Krishan, Gobind, Thakar, Gosain, Jagjivan, etc.

After the advent of Islam only one name ‘Allah’ was assigned to the God. It has also been mentioned in the Nanakian Philosophy as follows:

ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ ਅਲਹੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੇਖਾਂ ਆਈ ਵਾਰੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 1191.

“The Eternal Being started to be called Allah when the

turn of Sheikhs (Muslims) came.”

In Nanakian Philosophy Allah, like other names of God in Hinduism, has also been used for a number of times as indicated previously in describing some characteristics of the God.

However, in Nanakian Philosophy no descriptive or specific name (ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ) has been assigned to the God because of Its Abstract/Transcendent reality. Further analysis of Nanakian Philosophy also reveals that no particular name has been given to God, because there is no such name by which one could imagine the infinite attributes of God.

In general God is addressed as male. When God is addressed or represented as a male, some women get offended that how come God is never addressed as female. Guru Nanak used non-descriptive names, e.g. ਓਹੁ, ਆਪਿ, ਆਪੇ, ਏਕੁ, ਤੁ, ਤੁ, ਤੁਹੀ, ਅਗਮ, ਬੇਅੰਤੁ, etc.

Guru Nanak Says that the name of God is 'sach' or 'satt', In fact it is not a name but it is the characteristic that means the God exists and It existed even before the beginning of the time and space. For example, in: ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ॥ (The second verse on the first page of the AGGS. It has already been discussed under section 2. Existence of God). There is neither descriptive nor non-descriptive name; even it is without any indication to whom it is being addressed. It would become clear from the following phrase in Nanakian Philosophy why no descriptive or specific name has been assigned:

ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ² ਕਬੋ³ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ⁴ ॥ ਸਤਿ⁵ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ⁶ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ⁷ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1083

"Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive names¹ of That (the Almighty).

(In fact no descriptive name can be assigned because) That existed⁵ even before⁶ the beginning of the time and space⁷.

(Therefore) Its name is Ever-existing Entity (sat). (Explained in details later)

It is clear from the above verse that in Nanakian Philosophy there is no need to address the God with any descriptive or specific name because whatever the description is given will never be able to convey It in Its reality.

DEFINITION OF GOD

Now a question arises. What is the precise and concise definition of God in Nanakian Philosophy? The Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1], which is commonly called as *Mool*

Mantar by the Sikhs at large and by almost all the Sikh scholars, defines the God. The irony is that no such title was assigned either by Guru Nanak when it was composed or by Guru Arjan at the time of compilation of the AGGS. Let us examine the Commencing Verse of the AGGS scientifically and logically to find out whether it is a Mool Mantar or a precise and concise definition of the God. Although it has been discussed in details previously [4], it is being discussed here again briefly since it is needed here to describe the concept of God according to the Nanakian Philosophy and also to avoid back reference.

INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMENCING VERSE

The Commencing Verse of the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ¹

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ²

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

Interpretation:

The Commencing Verse has been divided into three parts for the sake of easy interpretation:

1. The first part is ੴ¹.
2. The second part is from ਸਤਿ to ਸੈਭੰ².
3. ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ as the third part.

In fact all the three parts make one compact unite of the Commencing Verse.

1. The first part ੴ¹ is generally pronounced by many theologians and scholars as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ik Oankaar*) or ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ikankaar*). The survey of the available literature indicates that this pronunciation might have been coined by the early Sikh scholars under the heavy influence of ancient philosophy because writing of 'Oankaar' or 'Om' before every writing was very common in the ancient literature.

The study conducted by Dr Joginder Singh [17] indicated that almost all early interpretations of *Jap* (Sodhi Meharban, Swami Aanad Ghan, Santokh Singh, Pandit Tara Singh, and many more) are dominated by Vedic and Puranic philosophy. Even some modern scholars like Dr Sahib Singh [23], Principal Harbhajan Singh [20], and Bhai Jodh Singh [in Ref. 17] are not free from the influence of Vedic and Puranic philosophy. Since the word 'Oankaar' ('Om') was common in the ancient philosophy, thus, these Sikh theologians erroneously started to pronounce ੴ¹ as 'Ik Oankar' (*Ik + Oankaar*) or *Ik Omkaar* (*Ik + Om + Kaar*).

This happened so because the words *Oankaar*, *Ikankaar* or *Omkaar* are found in a long *Bani* of Guru Nanak called *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* (*Oankaar*) (AGGS, M1, Pp 929-938). There are 54 verses in this *Bani*. The word *Oankaar* has been used as a *ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ* (descriptive name) of the Almighty only in the first verse. *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* (*Oankaar*) means the 'Creator'. Similarly, the word *Ikankaar* has been used in the same sense as a descriptive name meaning the 'Creator is One'. Since the attribute of 'Creator' has been used as 'ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ' (*Karta Purkh*) in the second part of the Commencing Verse, therefore, its interpretation as 'Creator' in the first part is not very logical. It means this attribute must be different than that of 'Creator' because the same attribute 'Creator' cannot be repeated two times in the same description of the Almighty.

To pronounce *ਓ* as *ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* or *ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ* (*Ik Oankaar* or *Ikankaar*) cannot be justified based on the fact that a *Bani* at pages 929-938 in AGGS is entitled as *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* (*Oankaar*). If Guru Nanak can use *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* in this *Bani* then he would have used it also in the Commencing Verse. Kalsi [9] has also pointed out that if open 'Oora' in *ਓ* is *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* then in the rest of the *Bani* open 'Oora' with extended end should have been used in place of *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ*. But it is not so. Therefore, *ਓ* cannot be pronounced as *ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* or *ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ* (*Ik Oankaar* or *Ikankaar*) under any circumstances. *ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ* has been used as one of the many descriptive names as a metaphor for the Almighty only in the first verse of this long *Bani*. In the next 53 verses of the same *Bani* other descriptive names, e.g. *ਕਰਤੇ*, *ਕਰਤਾਰਿ*, *ਓਨਮ*, *ਰਾਮ*, *ਹਰਿ*, *ਠਾਕੁਰੁ*, etc. have been used as metaphors of the Almighty. However, in the *Rahaoo* (Pause) of the same *Bani* Guru Nanak has condemned the use of descriptive names:

ਸੁਣਿ ਪਾਡੇ ਕਿਆ ਲਿਖਹੁ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ ॥
ਲਿਖੁ¹ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ² ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ³ ਗੋਪਾਲਾ⁴ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 930.

(Note: 1. Metaphor for understanding; 2,4. Metaphors for the God; 3. One who follows the Guru's philosophy)

"Hey! Pundit listen: What is in writing the ritualistic confused word (*Om*, *Oankar* or *Omkar*)?
Oh Gurmukh! ³ Understand¹/comprehend¹ the God ²
⁴."

It is important to note that whenever '**Ik Oankar**' or '**Ikankar**' has been used in the *Gurbani* (AGGS, Pp: 916, 929,930, 1003, 1061, 1310) it represents metaphoric name of the God, but it does not represent it as a pronunciation of *ਓ*.

It has been discussed earlier that Guru Nanak is not in favor of giving any descriptive or specific name to the God. According to him it is of no avail to write any descriptive name like 'Oankar' or 'Om' before any writing. The most important thing is to understand/comprehend the Almighty. Thus, under no circumstances *ਓ* could be considered as an abbreviation of '**Ik Oankaar**' or '**Ikankaar**', therefore, it should also not be pronounced as '**Ik Oankaar**' or '**Ikankaar**'. In fact, it is a new word, *ਓ*, i. e. '**One**' + '**Oora**' with an open end and that is extended, coined by Guru Nanak to explain the '**Oneness**' and '**Infiniteness**' of the '**Oh**', the Almighty, to whom no descriptive or specific name can be assigned.

I may mention here that Oosho [13] described *ਓ* as follows:

"..ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਸ ਇੱਕ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਉਹੀ *ਓ* ਹੈ, ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਤਾ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ । ਰਾਮ ਕਹੋ, ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਹੋ, ਅਲਾਹ ਕਹੋ, ਇਹ ਨਾਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ । ਇਹ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਹਨ, ਸੰਕੋਤਕ ਹਨ । ਪਰ ਇੱਕ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਉਹ *ਓ* ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਓਮ ਹੈ ।"

"... Nanak says that the name of that One is *ਓ*, all other names are given by man, whether one says Ram, Krishan or Allah, are the names given by man. These are descriptive (reference) (*ਕਿਰਤਮ*) names. But there is one name that has not been given by man, that is *ਓ*, that is Om "

In spite of the above fact explained by him, Oosho fell back to Vedic philosophy and declared that *ਓ* is 'ਓਮ' (Om) at the end of his statement. 'Om' is a descriptive name as the sum of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, reported by many Sikh scholars [17, 19, 20, 23].

Contrary to all the above description of *ਓ*, Guru Nanak does not accept the trinity of the Almighty, i. e., Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (AGGS, Jap 30, P 7). It appears that most of the Sikh scholars including Bhai Kahn Singh [18], Dr Sahib Singh [23], Dr Sher Singh [24], etc. are under the strong influence of ancient philosophy as they put aside all the logic while equating *ਓ* with 'Om', the sum of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva?

Natural Pronunciation (Pronounced as Written)

After working with many scholars on the pronunciation of *ਓ* and interpretation of the Commencing Verse it becomes clear that *ਓ* is composed of two parts, i.e. numeral '1' and the first letter of *Gurmukhi* alphabet, *ਓ*, with an open end. The numeral '1' should be pronounced as 'Ik' and the letter *ਓ* (Oora) with open end as 'Oh'. Our further research lead us that the letter open 'Oora' means 'Oh' in

Punjabi-English Dictionary [8] and in *Mahan Kosh* of Bhai Kahn Singh [18]. 'Oh' of Punjabi and 'Oh' of English means 'That' in English. The open end of 'Oora' has been extended to characterize it as **ਬੇਅੰਤ (Beant - Infinite)**. Thus, it should be pronounced as **ਇਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (Ik Oh Beant) (Ik + Oh + Beant = One and Only, Oh, the Infinite)**. In some verses in Gurbani the God has also been addressed as **One and Only, Oh, and the Infinite**, which will support the above assertion:

i) Oneness:

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 350.

"The Almighty is One and Only, Hey Brother!"

ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੈ ਜਾਨ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 535.

"Hey Gurmukh! Comprehend the Almighty as One and Only."

ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ ¹ ਦਿਖਾਈ ² ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 907.

"The True Guru has shown ² me the vision ¹ that the One is in everything and everything is the One."

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਰਤੈ ਇਕੋ ਇਕੁ ਤੂੰ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 966.

"Nanak Says: " You, the One and Only, pervades everywhere."

ii) Oh:

ਓਹੁ ¹ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ ² ਮਨੁ ³ ਤਨੁ ⁴ ਦਇ⁵ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 931.

Oh ¹, Destiny-Scriber ² blesses ³ the mind ⁴ and body ⁵.

iii) Infiniteness:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ ਧਿਆਈ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 936.

Gurmukh (the Sikh) contemplates the Infinite, Who has no limit or end.

ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਣੇ ਕੋਇ ॥

AGGS, Jap 24, P 5.

"The infiniteness of That cannot be comprehended. (In fact) Nobody knows Its infiniteness."

iv) No Other:

ਵੈਵੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਹੀ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਏਕੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 433.

Nanak says: *"When blessed, I saw that there is no second.*

The One pervades everywhere and the One also pervades in my mind."

ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਗੋਈ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 355.

"The One, Who has created, the same One can destroy. There is no other than the One."

If we examine the above phrases, it is clear again that Guru Nanak has addressed the God as 'One and only', 'Oh', and 'Infinite'. He did not use any descriptive or specific name for the God.

If we examine the concepts of the God given in the other religions of the world it would indicate that many religions believe in Trinity of God and polytheism having many descriptive names. Although in Islam God is One but it has specifically been named as 'Allah' with only one prophet to represent It: **"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the apostle of Allah."**

Finally, it can be concluded that the **ੴ** can be pronounced as **Ik Oh Beant ('The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite')** that portrays the characteristics of **Oneness and Infiniteness of Oh**, the Almighty, and there cannot be any descriptive or specific name since Its Oneness and Infiniteness cannot be described with any known word and no new word can be coined for this purpose. The irony is that many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars have distorted unique concept of Nanak about the God back to the ancient philosophy and mythology by equating with the Trinity Power by addressing It as 'Ik Oamkar' or 'Ik Oankaar' instead of 'Ik Oh Beant'.

In the context of **Ik Oh Beant** it is important to quote a thought of Einstein (1879-1955), **"If he had a God it was the God of Spinoza."** [6]. {Spinozism: (1728) The philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) who taught that reality is one substance with an infinite number of attributes of which only thought and extension are capable of being comprehended by the human mind.} I am proud to say that this is very close to **ੴ** of Guru Nanak, prophesied about 200 years before Spinoza. After about 450 years Einstein, a scientist, realized the same concept of God defined by Guru Nanak, whereas, many Sikh theologians and scholars failed to understand the original and unique definition of the God as given in the Commencing Verse.

2. The second part of the verse describes the following attributes:

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ (Sat Naam): Before interpreting it, it is necessary to mention that 'satt' and 'naam' are two separate words. 'Naam' is an indication that there is no descriptive or specific name of the God that is why It

(God) is addressed as *Naam* by Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan has explained this fact as follows:
ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ² ਕਬੋ³ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ⁴ ॥ ਸਤਿ⁵ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ⁶
ਪੂਰਬਲਾ⁷ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1083.

"Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive names¹ of That (the Almighty).

(In fact no descriptive name can be assigned because)

That existed⁵ even before⁶ the beginning of the time and space⁷.

(Therefore) Its name is Ever-existing Entity (sat).

Moreover, the words, '*satt*' and '*sach*', are commonly used in the Gurbani and both means '**true or truth**' and/or '**exist or existence**' depending in which context these words have been used. Here the word '*satt*' means '**exists**'. Therefore, *naam*, means the **One**, Who has no specific name, but **exists**. This has been explained earlier under section: 2. Existence of God.

Therefore, it clearly indicates that ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ means that Entity or Ultimate Reality (ਨਾਮੁ), which has no specific name, however, It does exist (ਸਤਿ). This attribute is necessary to show that although this Entity is unknowable / inaccessible (ਅਗੰਮ), It does exist.

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ (*Karta Purkh*): '*Karta*' means a Creator and '*Purkh*' is a metaphor for the God, because there is no descriptive name for the God. '*Purkh*' has also been used in Gurbani in the same context, i.e. as a metaphor of the God as indicated in the following stanzas:

ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਿ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਤੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 138.

"You are Creator (*Purkh*) and Unknowable / Inaccessible, and created the universe Yourself."

ਤੂ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਲੇਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 1038.

"You (*Purkh*) are Ineffable, Inaccessible and Detached."

Macauliffe [from Ref. # 19] considers *Karta Purakh* as one word and ignores the translation of *Purakh*. His interpretation of *Karta Purakh* is 'Creator'.

ਨਿਰਭਉ (*Nirbhau*): Literally it means without any fear.

In other words the one who is without any fear means there is nobody else who controls that person. Therefore, '*Nirbhau*' means there is none who controls the Almighty. A fearlessness attribute of the Almighty is confirmed in the following verses:

ਏਕੇ ਕਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਉ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 796.

"The One has no fear of anybody. (The One does not take any order from any other, therefore.)

The Creator does Itself and make the others to work (under Its Laws)."

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 464.

Nanak says: "The Formless alone is without any fear from any, other innumerable deities (who are called gods) like Rama, are just dust (nothing)."

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ (*Nirvaer*): Many peoples believe that God could be revengeful and creates floods, and earthquakes; and causes deadly diseases, famines, etc. to punish the mankind. But according to Nanakian Philosophy God cannot be revengeful. It is without any enmity with anyone. Einstein realized this attribute of God described by Guru Nanak after about 450 years of Guru Nanak, when he remarked: "**Subtle is the Lord but malicious He is not.**" [14].

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ (*Akal Murt*): Here the word '*Murt*' is an allegorical body and is usually ignored in interpretation. Therefore, most scholars interpret '*Akal Murt*' as immortal that means the Almighty does not die and take birth. It cannot be so because this attribute has already been given by using the next word " ਅਜੂਨੀ " (*Ajuni*) in the commencing verse. Here '*Akal Murt*' should be interpreted as that metaphoric body (*murat*) of the Almighty on which there is no effect of time and space. It means It does not age and disintegrate with the effect of time and environment, and does not need any space to exist. For example,

ਤੂ¹ ਅਕਾਲ² ਪੁਰਖੁ³ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਿਰਿ⁴ ਕਾਲਾ⁵ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 1038.

"You¹ are without any effect of time² and space², thus, there is no fear of death⁵ on Your head⁴ (of *Purkh*³)."

(Here *Purkh* has been used in place of *Murat* indicating Its (God's) metaphoric body.)

ਅਜੂਨੀ (*Ajuni*): It is well established concept in the ancient philosophy of India that God appears in the form of human again and again when the cruelty on human beings is on the increase. Contrary to this philosophy Guru Nanak describes that the Almighty does not come into any human form. According to Guru Nanak the Almighty neither takes birth nor dies. After about 450 years of Guru Nanak, Einstein (6) has also realized this attribute described more than 500 years ago by Guru Nanak **that the Almighty does not come into anthropomorphic forms**. This characteristic has been mentioned in Gurbani repeatedly:

ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰੁ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 931.

"(It) is free from birth and death cycle nothing

interferes in It."

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1136.

"The Almighty is free from birth and death."

ਤੂੰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਾ ਅਵਹੀ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1095.

"You are the Greatest and do not come in life-death cycle."

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ¹ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 916.

"The One (whose metaphoric body)¹ is without any effect of time and environment, is free from life-death cycle, is created by Itself and gives light to dispel darkness."

{Note: ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ is equivalent to ਗੁਰ (Enlightener)}

ਅਮੋਖ ¹ ਦਰਸਨ ² ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ॥ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ³ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀ ਖਉ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1082.

"The Inexhaustible¹ Bounteous² is without life-death cycle and is created by Itself. There is no effect of time and space (on Its allegoric body)³ and is never destroyed."

(Note: ਦਰਸਨ is equivalent to ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ)

ਸੈਭੰ (*sabang*) : It means the One that is created by Oneself: It has been said in Gurbani many times:

ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਸੋਇ ॥ AGGS, Jap 5, P 2.

"(It) can neither be structured nor created. The Pure One is created by Itself."

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਪ ਨਾ ਮਾਇ ਕਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਾ ਰੇਖ ਵਰਨ ਸਥਾਇਆ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 1279.

"You have no father and no mother, who has given You a birth?"

You are without any form and without any sign of any caste."

3. The Third part is ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*):

The interpretation of the third part, ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*), is also as controversial as is the first one, ਐਕੰ (*Ik Oh Beant*). Pritam Singh [19] in his analysis sums up views of some scholars as follows:

Bhai Vir Singh, Dr Sahib Singh, Parma Nand, and a number of earlier scholars such as Hari Ji and Anand Ghan interpret *Gur Parsad* as "God is achievable through the Grace of the Guru." Sohan Singh Galhotra chooses to join 'Saibam' with 'Gur Parsad' and make this combination yield the following meanings: "....

born itself, He is my Guru, through whose courtesy I have been able to say and am going to say or write more of it now." Prof. Teja Singh interprets it as "I begin with the Grace of the Guru whose attributes have been given from Ik Oankar to Saibam."

Dr Mann [10] has expressed his disappointment that in the UNESCO Collection [25], the most reputed theologians: Trilochan Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkrishan Singh, and a historian, Khushwant Singh, have interpreted '*Gur Prasad*' as '*By the Grace of the Guru made known to man*'. Dr Joginder Singh [17] reported that many early Sikh scholars have given the same interpretation. Similarly, Principal Harbhajan Singh [20] also interpreted as done by the other scholars [19, 23, 24, 25]. Now almost every Sikh theologian and scholar accepts this interpretation. The irony is that there is no such word that could be interpreted as '*made known to man*'. It is simply '*Gur Prasad*'.

Dr Mann [10] interpreted it as '*Great and Bountiful*'. Dr Gopal Singh [16] has interpreted it as '*Enlightener*'. Baldev Singh [15] interprets it as '*Enlightener*'. He has even gone to that extent to suggest that there should be a seminar to find out the real interpretation of '*Gur Prasad*'.

Let us take **Gur** and **Prasad** as two independent words as are the other attributes of the Almighty discussed in part 2 of the Commencing Verse.

a. ਗੁਰ (*Gur*)

Gur is spelled in the following four forms in the Gurbani:

i) ਗੁਰ,

ii) ਗੁਰੁ,

iii) ਗੁਰੂ, and

iv) ਗੁਰਿ.

According to Bhai Kahn Singh [18] all these forms are pronounced as ਗੁਰੂ (**Guru**). It also means it is singular noun. He [18] explains that **Guru** means that devour and is enlightening/enlightener. Another scholar [2] also interpret it as follows:

GU = means darkness, and

RU = means light.

Thus, **Guru** is Light that dispels darkness (ignorance). It means **Enlightener**.

b. ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Parsad*):

Since the last letter *Dadda* of ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ carries *sihari*, , therefore, ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ should be interpreted as '*Guru through the Grace* because a preposition 'from', 'by', 'of

' or 'through' is applicable according to the grammar rule propounded by Principal Harbhajan Singh [21]. It has been discussed in detail in other article [4] that *sihari* with the last letter in a word does not mean to indicate a proposition, like from, through, of, or by as suggested by Principal Harbhajan Singh [21]. Here ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ is a singular noun as an attributes like others as found in the Commencing Verse. Therefore, ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*parsad*) should be interpreted as 'Bounteous' without the use of any preposition. Since ਗੁਰ (Gur) is already without any *sihari*, therefore, it should also be interpreted as 'Enlightener' without any preposition.

Moreover, where does the "made known to man" come from? There are only two words, ਗੁਰ and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ. There are no other words in the whole Commencing Verse that can be interpreted as "made known to man". Therefore, interpretation of ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as 'By the Grace of the Guru made known to man' is absolutely wrong because ਗੁਰ and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ are two distinct attributes of the Almighty like others given in the part 2 of the Commencing Verse. These words should be interpreted as two different attributes of the God: ਗੁਰ as 'Enlightener' and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as 'Bounteous' without the use of any preposition, like 'from', 'of', 'by', or 'through'.

Macauliffe [from Ref # 19] translates 'Gur Parsad' as "by the favor of the Guru". But he had explained it in his footnote, he does it under a sort of duress. He says: "We have translated this word (*Gur Parsad*) in deference to the opinions of the majority of the Sikhs, but with several learned *gianis*, we have no doubt that they were intended as epithets of God - **The Great and Bountiful.**"

Dr Gopal Singh [11] interpreted ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*) only as **Enlightener**.

FINAL INTERPRETATION

Now if we put everything, as discussed above, together then a scientific and logical interpretation of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS could be as follows, nevertheless, still a better interpretation than this may become available in the future:

**The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists;
Creator;
Without fear (Not governed by any other);
Without enmity;
Timeless (Without effect of time and environment);
Neither takes birth nor dies;
Created by Itself²;**

Enlightener; and Bounteous³.

The above scientific and logical analysis of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS clearly indicates that it is not a mantar or Mool Mantar in any respect but a precise and concise definition of the **Transcendent (Abstruse / Abstract) Entity**. Although the God of Guru Nanak is Transcendent still It **exists (satt / sach)** hence the word 'Entity' has been used. Again It is a unique Entity and there is no other like It, therefore, It is designated as 'ੴ' (One and Only). Since there is no descriptive name for the God of Guru Nanak, therefore, It is addressed as 'It'.

In Punjabi a definition is called **Manglacharan**. *Manglacharan* according to Dr Sahib Singh [23] and Bhai Kahn Singh [18] is that phrase in which the poets often describe the one in which they have full confidence or faith. The phrase or verse used to describe that one is called *Manglacharan* in Punjabi. In other words it means a definition in English. Therefore, if the Commencing Verse is to be identified for any purpose, it could be called **Manglacharan**, or it may be called simply the **Commencing Verse** of the AGGS. But definitely not as **Mool Mantar** because there is no place of any type of Mantar in the Gurbani:

ਤੰਤੁ¹ ਮੰਤੁ² ਪਾਖੰਡੁ³ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ⁴ ਰਿਦੈ⁵ ਮਨੁ⁶ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥
ਅੰਜਨੁ⁷ ਨਾਮੁ⁸ ਤਿਸੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਝੈ⁹ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ¹⁰ ਸਚੁ¹¹ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 766.

"I (Nanak) do not believe in magical formulae¹, magical hymns², (including diagrams of mystical characters - *yantar - Yantra*) and religious hypocrisies³, because my mind⁶ is imbibed⁵ with the Almighty⁴). The teaching of the Guru is the collyrium⁷ [substance (antimony) used to make eyes see better and look beautiful] that made (me) capable of understanding the Almighty through the teachings of the Guru."

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn about the concept of the God, according to the Nanakian Philosophy:

- i) The God is an Abstract / Transcendent Entity, still It existed before the beginning of the time and space, and in the past; It exists now, and It will exist forever.
- ii) No descriptive or specific name can be assigned to the God.
- iii) The God was created by Itself and then It created the Nature (Laws of Nature, Laws of Universe).
- iv) The God and the Nature (Laws of Nature, Laws of Universe) are one and the same entity.

- v) After creating the Nature (Laws of Nature, Laws of Universe) It pervades in It.
- vi) There is no trinity of the God and every action and reaction in the universe and in the living beings are happening according to the Laws of Nature/Laws of Universe.

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Commencing Verse of Aad Guru Granth Sahib Definition of God MANGLACHARAN

ੴ	<i>The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite</i>
ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ	<i>Exists</i>
ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ	<i>Creator</i>
ਨਿਰਭਉ	<i>Without fear (Not governed by any other)</i>
ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ	<i>Without enmity</i>
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ	<i>Timeless (Without effect of time and environment)</i>
ਅਜੂਨੀ	<i>Neither takes birth nor dies</i>
ਸੈਭੰ	<i>Created by Itself</i>
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ	<i>Enlightener and Bounteous</i>